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THE NEW YORKER

D. Ehrenberg

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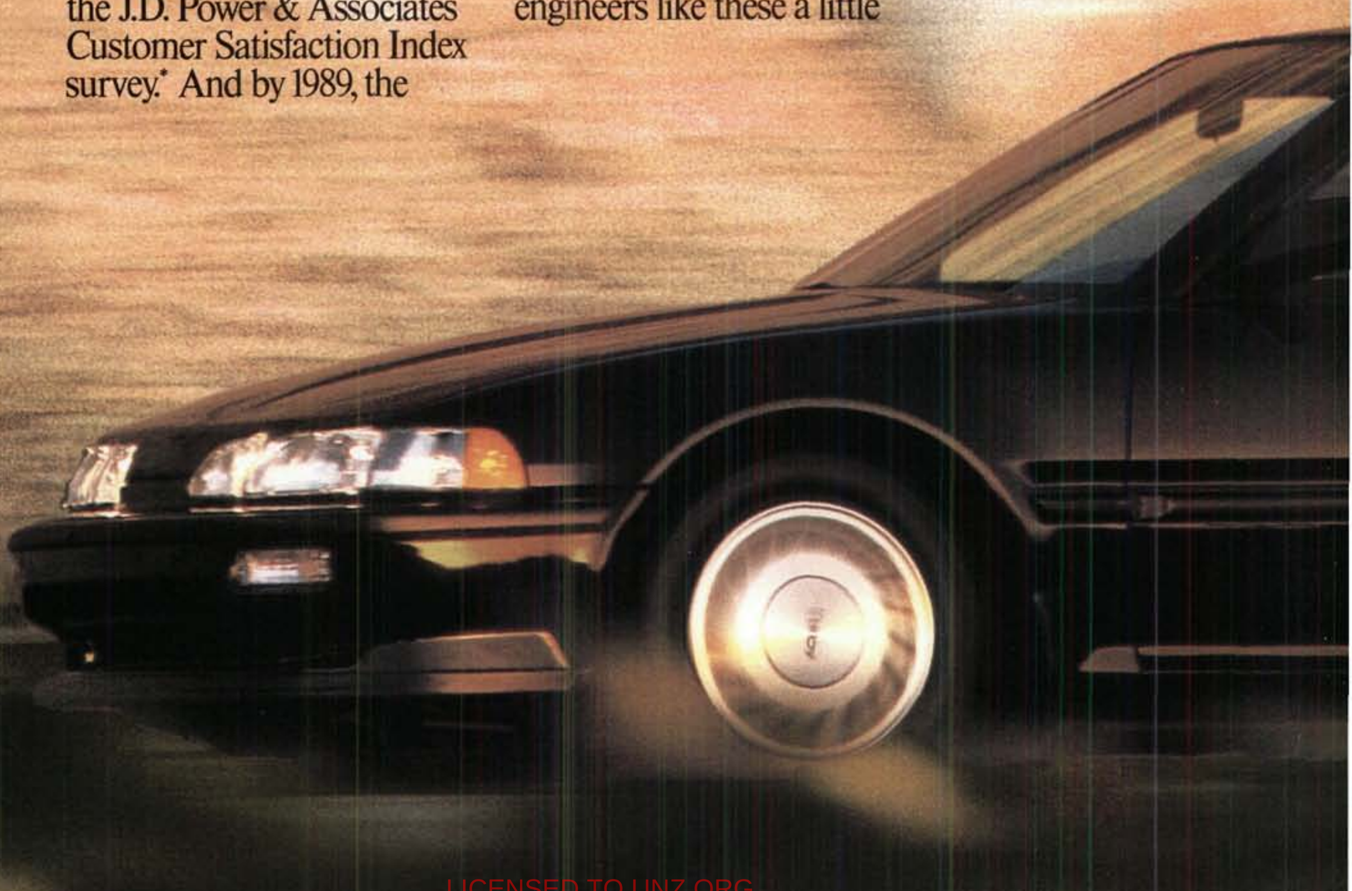

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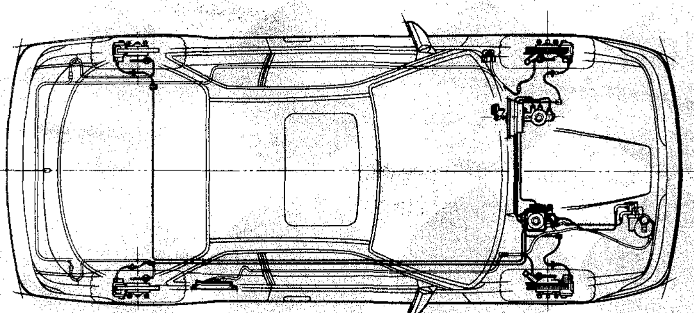

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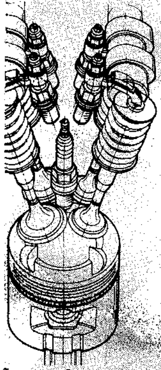

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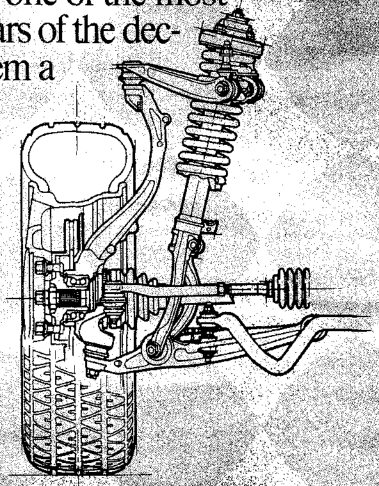

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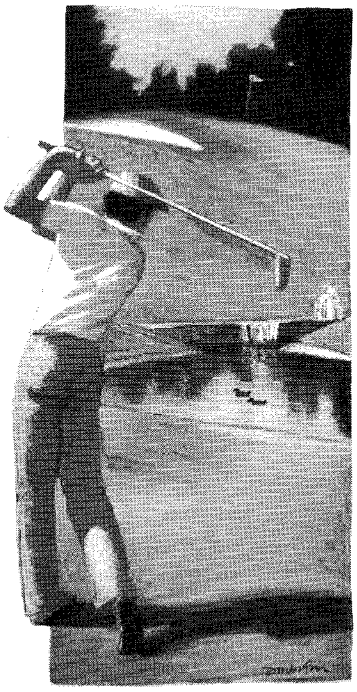

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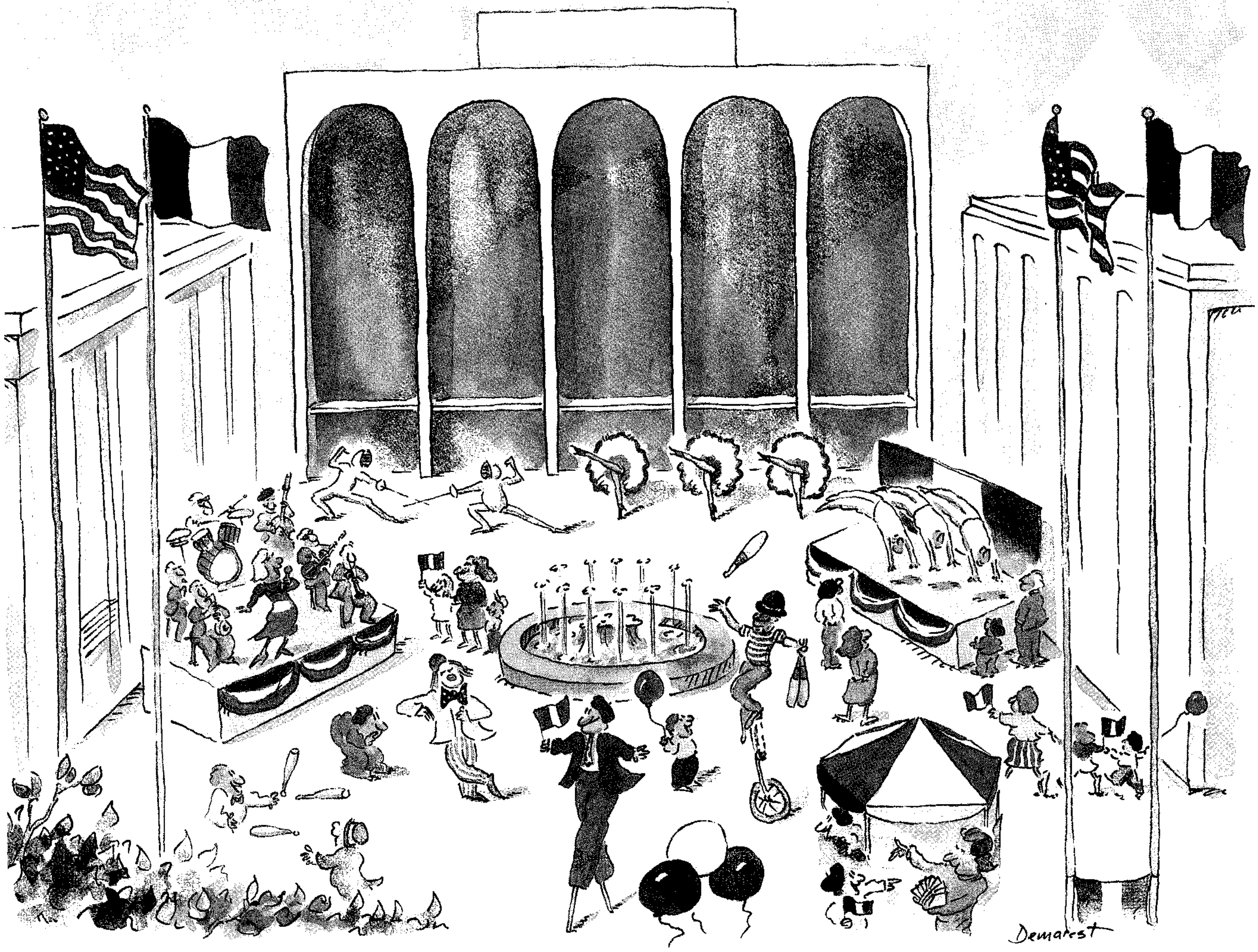

Two hundred years ago, the storming of the Bastille marked the start of the French Revolution. The cry for freedom and equality was heard around the world.

This Bastille Day, July 14, 1989, you are invited to mark the occasion at an outdoor party sponsored by Sara Lee Corporation at Lincoln Center's Fountain Plaza . From 2:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., enjoy entertainment in the best tradition of French street performing—jugglers, magicians,can-can dancers, acrobats, mimes, puppeteers, stiltwalkers, singers, musicians and fencers. See the dazzling La Troupe Circus and the world premiere of "Tales of Exile," a performance commissioned by the French Embassy especially for this celebration.

Join New York City's official Bastille Day commemoration of the Bicentennial of the French Revolution. No storming, but lots of applauding.

Vive la célébration!

For more information: (212) 877-2011. Rain date: July 15.

BASTILLE DAY AT LINCOLN CENTER, JULY 14, 1989

Lincoln Center

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19			

THE THEATRE

THERE is no such thing as a free lunch, but there is free Shakespeare in the Park, provided you can conform to the rules. The numbers that are given out at four o'clock on the Great Lawn, near the Delacorte Theatre, are supposed to hold a place for two, yet when tickets are handed out at six-fifteen they're given on a one-to-one basis only to those who are actually on-site. That's when all the excuses start: "My friend called me from Bethesda Fountain. He had a flat on his bicycle, but he'll be right here" (there aren't any phones around the fountain); or, "The other ticket is for my grandmother, and she can't endure too much heat." People have offered money to the Poet O (who for years has serenaded those in line with "odes for all occasions" that almost always include a couplet about hemorrhoids) to stand in their absent partner's stead. The New York Shakespeare Festival staff, however, recognize him quicker than they do Joe Papp.

Patrons of N.Y.S.F., the press, celebrities, and those who know the cast can reserve tickets at the box office, but these have to be picked up by seven-thirty, at which time all dibs are erased. That's when the Festival staff don their psychological armor for the onslaught of more excuses, pleas, and demands, which come fast and desperate after the announcement, "This performance is sold out. There are no more available seats." There is the old standby "Let me talk to the manager. He knows me." (The manager appeared; he didn't.) The next person tried "Do you have just two? I don't care where they are." And the next person, "We just drove all the way from Lodi. Can't we sit in the aisles?" These did not meet with success. Hang around long enough, though, and look sharp, because you may spot someone with extra passes to give away. "Do you want two tickets?" a young woman asked a harried shutout. The gentleman, who mistook her for either a N.Y.S.F. staffer or an angel, rushed up to the box office joyously demanding, "Where can I make a contribution? I want to make a contribution." If Joe Papp took a cue from this angel and dispersed fifty tickets a night her way, he'd rake in so much he'd have to worry less about federal grants.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedules and ticket information.)

The Lady in Question—A comedy written by and starring Charles Busch and directed by Kenneth Elliott. Seen in a brief engagement at the W.P.A. Theatre last fall. Previews begin July 14. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Stary Theatre—Presenting **THE DYBBUK** and **HAMLET IV** at Summerfare, in Purchase. See listing under Arts Festivals, page 15.

NEW THIS SEASON

Aristocrats—Brian Friel's portrait of the family of Judge O'Donnell, of Ballybeg Hall, in Donegal, is witty, ironic, and loving. It is faultlessly performed by Niall Buggy (an astonishing actor who got his start at the Abbey Theatre), Peter Crombie, John Pankow, Kaiulani Lee, John Christopher James, and Margaret Colin, among others, under the direction of Robin Lefèvre. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/8/89.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-0102.)

Black and Blue—An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (2/6/89, under Dancing.) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

The Cocktail Hour—A dramatist returns home to break the news to his prosperous family that he has written a play about them and to ask their permission to have it produced. More easily said than done. A. R. Gurney's humor has never been more sparkling, his characters never more engaging. Under Jack O'Brien's direction, Nancy Marchand gives a marvellous performance as the hero's mother. With Holland Taylor, Burt Edwards, and Richard Backus. (11/7/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

ADULT GOOD HUMOR

We love those vans that go trucking around town with a big Plexiglas box on the back full of huge plastic ice cubes surrounding an enormous fake bottle of booze. They're not only plugging spirits; they're also a form of Truth in Advertising. Lately, many liquor ads in the print media are so upscale you almost feel that it's sinful to order a Martini unless you've been promoted to C.E.O. or signed a six-figure book contract. If things are going that well, who needs a drink?

The mobile ads give it to you straight: the heat of summer sidewalks, the importunings of panhandlers, the traffic jams, and the sound of jackhammers make us crave something tall and cool to soothe the nerves. Now, if only they would add a pair of Brobdingnagian straws, some salted macadamias, and the Incomparable Hildegarde at the keyboard, playing "On the Road Again."

Cyrano de Bergerac—The Riverside Shakespeare Company's free open-air production of the Edmond Rostand classic. (July 11 at 6:30, Snug Harbor, Staten Island; July 12 at 6:30, Comas Mall, Bronx Park; July 13 at 6:30, Astoria Park, Queens; July 14 at 6 and July 15 at 5:30, Conservatory Garden, Central Park; July 16 at 6:30, Henry Hudson Memorial Park, the Bronx; and July 19 at 6:30, Long Meadow, Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Closes July 23.)

The Heidi Chronicles—Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With a superb cast, led by Joan Allen and Boyd Gaines. (12/26/88) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Hot Minute—A musical revue, conceived by Melanie Mintz, about backup singers and their aspirations toward the big time. With Vivian Cherry, Pattie Darcy, Jon Fiore, Annie Golden, and John-Martin Green. The show runs one night a week, on Thursdays (at 8 and 11), through August. (Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. 228-6300.)

I Could Go On Lip-Synching!—This one-man variety show made up of cultural arcana is kind of weird, kind of quirky, and kind of brilliant. Performed by John Epperson and written by him and Justin Ross (who directed), it uses the rhetorical tactics of drag theatre to attack some of the Big Questions, managing not so much to raise lip-synching to an art as to transform aural montage into psychodrama. Certainly this is the strangest show in town. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556.)

Jerome Robbins' Broadway—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives—Performances resume July 18. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Largely New York—It would be a mistake to assume that Bill Irwin's dance-mime extravaganza is fundamentally boring because it lacks words; in fact, it has the best "book" on Broadway. The piece is partly a sendup of theatrical technology, partly a comment on the ills that beset a pluralistic society, and partly a debate about art. Irwin puts onstage all the conflicts, tensions, and antagonisms of modern city life and resolves them by means of an invented language. His solution is unrealistic—it obtains only in a theatre—but what makes the message so uplifting is that to understand it you have to learn a new idiom. (5/15/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Laughing Matters—This comedy revue by the team of Wallem and Tolan is so consistently unfunny that it borders on the offensive. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 564-8038.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Caroline Lagerfelt, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks make up the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting George M. Cohan's **GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY**, with some additional music and lyrics by Todd Ellison. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Love Letters—Staged readings of A. R. Gurney's new two-character play. July 10, Judith Ivey

Sometimes what it takes to put a life back together is a hammer and nails.

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GENERAL DYNAMICS

A Strong Company For A Strong Country

and Victor Garber; July 16, Frances Sternhagen and Philip Bosco. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Only Kidding!—Jim Geoghan's comedy about standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. (One monologue, about a Greek restaurant, is a knockout.) The characters are an aging Catskills type; a young comedy team, still scrambling for a foothold; a jumpy writer; and a beef-brained manager. All the actors do well, under the lively direction of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Other People's Money—Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. Kevin Conway can seldom have been better or funnier than he is as Bronx-born Lawrence Garfinkle, and Janet Zarish plays his adversary (with a difference). They are ably supported by Scotty Bloch, James Murtaugh, and Arch Johnson. The performance as a whole is a credit to Gloria Muzio, who directed it. An import from the Hartford Stage Company. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Rumors—This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. It is acted to perfection by Ron Leibman, Joyce Van Patten, Charles Brown, and Cynthia Darlow, under the impeccable direction of Gene Saks. (11/28/88) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Patricia Kilgarriff in the title, and only, role. Ellen Burstyn replaces Miss Kilgarriff starting July 17. Directed by Simon Callow. (2/27/89) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Showing Off—As comedy revues go, this one—written by Douglas Bernstein and Denis Markell—isn't at all bad. The winning performances by Mr. Bernstein, Bebe Neuwirth, Mark Sawyer, and Veanne Cox often make the material seem better than it is, but ultimately they don't compensate for the over-all smugness of what is essentially life-style comedy. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

A Tale of Two Cities—Everett Quinton's over-the-top one-man version of the Dickens novel has Miss Pross literally hanging from the ceiling. Unfortunately, his performance is more spirited than it is consistently funny. Best is the word "BLOOD" scrawled on the bathroom wall. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes July 14.)

Twelfth Night—The first of two plays in the New York Shakespeare Festival's free summer series in the Park. The large cast includes John Amos, Stephen Collins, Jeff Goldblum, Gregory Hines, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, Michelle Pfeiffer, Fisher Stevens, and Charlaine Woodard. Directed by Harold Guskin. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. Closes July 23. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

Ubu—An inept revival of Alfred Jarry's fin-de-siècle political farce, née "Ubu Roi." (7/10/89) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes July 16.)

LONG RUNS

ANYTHING GOES: This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Leslie Uggams, Bill McCutcheon, and Gregg Edelman, does *more than justice to the words and score.* (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. *Directed by Ron Lagomarsino.* (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently turned twenty-nine. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Dorothy Kiara, David B. McDonald, and Jeff Lyons. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **INTO THE WOODS:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful and funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. The cast includes Nancy Dussault, Tom Aldredge, Kay McClelland, and Chip Zien. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play, with John Rubinstein and B. D. Wong. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A *musical comedy* by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress (Suzy Hunt), her assistant (Dorrie Joiner), and four steady customers. (Bette Henritze, Anna Minot, Rosemary Prinz, and Cynthia Vance). (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

WALKABOUT

Numbing irreality is in the nature of an atrium, but occasionally a slice of life—even politics—sneaks in. The Park Avenue Atrium, at Lexington Avenue and 45th Street, seems unscathed by current events. There's plenty of greenery and few shadows, and, at lunchtime, office workers murmur as discreetly as movie extras as they brown-bag it on marble benches under chrome-potted trees. Some of the employees whoosh promptly back up to their offices, on a see-through glass elevator. Others walk off their meal, taking in whatever art or craft is displayed in glass cases along the atrium's walls—usually something mildly sweet, like Indian blankets, say, or cartoons, or kimonos. But "Into the Third Dimension," the current display (through August 25th), of mostly high-relief, tabletop-size constructions, is no visual digestif. *The first case, for instance, features Muammar Qaddafi (papier-mâché), Fergie and Prince Andrew (corrugated cardboard), a Gila monster (plastic beads, mostly), two species of bats ("Die Fledermaus" and Egyptian Fruit), and George Bush (clay). Elsewhere, Ed Koch is posed next to an item involving an egg, a brick, and a nail; and at one end of the next-to-last case is "Nixon—The Shrunken Head of State" (clay, acrylic, hair).*

DANCE

WARM weather brings outdoor performances around the city, many of them free. For audience members who may be toting small children, these concerts can be a way to amuse their charges and sit down, too. For the dancers—who remember the unpredictable sound and lighting systems, the inhibiting floors, the ambient noise, the mosquitoes, and the difficulty of trying to keep the audience's attention without the help of walls—performing in nature is tantamount to boot camp. Yet some of the outdoor series have more adventurous programming than what one might see indoors at Christmastime, and occasionally one can find a favorite company trying out new things.

One of the most well-rounded outdoor dance series this year is at the Band Shell in Brooklyn's Prospect Park (9th Street and Prospect Park West). The stage is small, there are no wings, and the sound of nearby picnickers carries, so go with patience. An African-American program teams up the Charles Moore Dance Theatre with assorted experts in break dancing and rap (July 29th; rain date, August 2nd). On a Latin evening, Roots of Brasil will perform *capoeira* and Carnaval dances from Rio, and the Eddie Torres Latin Dance Company will demonstrate popular fifties styles, such as the mambo and cha-cha (July 30th; rain date, July 31st). The series opens this week with the Niagara Falls Woodland Singers & Dancers, who will stage social dances of the Iroquois tribe: "The Rabbit" and "The Raccoon" (July 15th; rain date, July 16th at 3 P.M.). All performances begin at 8 P.M. and run about two hours.

IN TOWN

Kirov Ballet—July 10-14 at 8: "Sleeping Beauty." . . . ¶ July 15 at 8: "Le Corsaire." . . . ¶ July 17-19 at 8: "The Kingdom of the Shades from 'La Bayadère' " and "The Battleship Potemkin." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 22.)

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet at Saratoga Springs—July 11-12 at 8:15: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . . ¶ July 13 at 2: "Donizetti Variations," "Mozart Serenade," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ July 13 at 8:15: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . . ¶ July 14 at 8:15: "The Four Temperaments," "Danses Concertantes," "Beethoven Romance," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ July 15 at 2: "Donizetti Variations," "Antique Epigraphs," "Beethoven Romance," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ July 15 at 8:15: "The Four Temperaments," "Echo," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ July 18 at 8:15: "Divertimento No. 15," "Echo," and "Firebird." . . . ¶ July 19 at 8:15: "Serenade," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center. 1-518 587-3330. Through July 22.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 11-15: The Miami City Ballet, directed by Edward Villella, in performances of "Valse Fantaisie," "Tarantella," "Nous Sommes," "Who Cares?," and "Square Dance." . . . ¶ July 18-19: Compagnie Jean-François Duroure, a contemporary dance group from Paris, will present a full-length work entitled "La Maison des Plumes Vertes." (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8, and Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2.)

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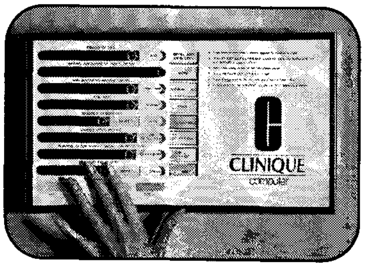

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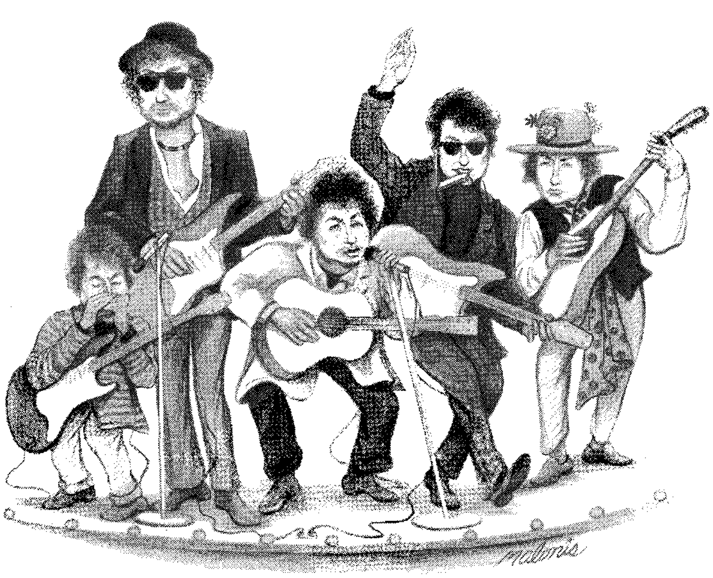

Bob Dylan Imitators Contest at Speakeasy

NIGHT LIFE

Adrian Belew can talk to the animals. In recent years, he has turned in some respectable work as a front man, singing and writing for the last incarnation of King Crimson and, later, for the Bears. As a session guitarist, he has been everybody's answer to the musical question "Who you gonna call?," and he has been on hand for a few of this decade's more memorable albums: Talking Heads' "Remain in Light," Laurie Anderson's "Mister Heartbreak," and Paul Simon's "Graceland." Yet when you think of Belew's playing you hear the uncanny guitar-induced chatter of birds, rhinos, and elephants. Belew, who belongs to the musician-as-mad-scientist school of thought and who will play four shows at the Bottom Line this week, has spent so much time making his guitar do impressions that he has had to remind people that he can make it sound "like a guitar."

Onstage, Belew has a cartoonish presence. He shakes a lot of hands, gives mini-lectures on new pieces of equipment, and puts his guitar through such torturous paces—occasionally, he plays with his teeth—that you're left wishing that, like Jimi Hendrix, he would just go ahead and burn it. Belew's latest and best solo album, the pop-inclined "Mr. Music Head," is a vigorous nod in the direction of the Beatles, and features plenty of strange tape snippets, backward guitar solos, and an "Abbey Road"-style mini-opera entitled "1967." The songs, for the most part, were written at the piano, and they proceed at the breezy clip of, say, "Woke up, fell out of bed, dragged a comb across my head." There are still plenty of guitars, however, and there are likely to be even more of them at the Bottom Line—guitars that sound like guitars, and everything else for that matter.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Thirty-year-olds in love call Mabel Godwin "a *scandal.*" Now in her seventies, she remains a singer of racy jazz numbers, a devout chatterer, a wearer of gold lamé suits, and a pianist who perks along quite nicely to the accompaniment of a snare and a standup bass. Ms. Godwin performs Thursdays through Saturdays from nine-thirty. On Sundays, cornettist **lee lorenz** leads the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band, and on Mondays the Grove Street Stompers do their Dixieland thing. Arthur's is currently decorated for the holidays—Christmas, New Year's, Halloween, and St. Patrick's Day.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hangs over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine, **la gran scena opera company** comes in to dis Verdi; Bruce Hopkins, a member of the troupe, sings solo Tuesdays through Thursdays at eleven. Little Jimmy Scott, a Lionel Hampton alumnus, takes the mike on Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—On the back wall of this jazz club there's a neon version of the Manhattan skyline, with a crescent moon and two stars attendant upon it—one of the best examples of inert-gas folk art we know of. July 11-16, guitarist **jim hall,** bassist **ron carter,** and pianist-singer-songwriter **dave frishberg** put their heads together. Brazilians **baden powell** (guitar) and **eliane elias** (keyboards) start up on July 18. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Music for many kinds of people, including unreconstructed folkies, rock-and-roll fundamentalists, Village bopcats, and followers of English folk guitarist **john renbourn,** who'll be here with Jacqui McShee and Tony Roberts *on July 11. July 14-15 will feature* performances by singer and soul-searcher **loudon wainwright** and **ilene weiss,** a singer-comedienne who, among other things, sings "Psycho Killer" in the manner of Shirley Temple. **adrian belew,** on tour for his new solo album, will be here July 16-17, and **don dixon** comes in on July 18. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. Pianist **kenny werner** and bassist **santi debriano** will be here July 10-15; the latter takes a turn with pianist **henry butler** on July 16; and starting July 17 the place belongs to **michael weiss** (piano), **peter washington** (bass), and **kenny washington** (drums). First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Pretty much everything about this jazz room is nice: the long rows of tables covered with pink linen, the bijou bandstand, the view from the bar of the bandstand, and the view out the window of Vaux & Withers' Neuschwansteinian courthouse. A quartet belonging to alto-sax-and-flute man **carlos ward—ronnie burrage** (drums), **reggie washington** (bass), and **rod williams** (keyboards)—will perform July 11-16. Music from nine-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, Vertès murals on the walls, and, for the rest of the summer, Frank Owens at the piano. Sets at ten and midnight Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Dan Lynch, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a couple of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside, you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar decorated with an Aretha poster and remnants of a birch tree. The place brightens up considerably at ten, with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte.* **billy cobham,** a powerhouse drummer who helped put fusion on the map, sits down at the kit July 11-16, with his quartet. Violinist **noel pointer** brings in his quintet on July 18, for six nights. Mondays are set aside for guitarist **les paul,** who was known as Rhubarb Red back in the twenties and thirties, when he was an itinerant country picker. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—The kind of classy place where no sooner do they give you a plate than they take it away. Fortune Garden is decorated for a greenhouse effect, and the priorities here are Chinese food, hanging plants, and jazz. A trio belonging to **barry harris,** a pianist who favors Monk and Powell, will be here July 11-16; Bob Alexander brings in a trio of his own on July 17. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A modernist night spot, in the basement of the Hotel Edison. Drummer **max roach,** the activist, composer, and son of a gospel singer, performs with his percussion ensemble M'Boom July 11-16. Beginning July 18, **millie** ("Mess on Your Hands") **jackson**—an R. & B. singer who never understood why Whitney Houston made it and she didn't, and said so—will fill the club with X-rated banter and news from the battle-of-the-sexes front. Music after nine.

Jan Wallman's, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A cozy room for singers and their followers, cheek by jowl with the Iroquois Hotel. July 12, Shawn Norton performs with some help from house pianist **wes mc afee;** Jordan Carroll goes it alone on July 13; and on July 15, Mr. McAfee lends a hand to **barbara lea.** Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Turn-of-the-century New York Sunday *Herald* posters and Hirschfeld caricatures on the walls, and, next to the brass-railed partition between the bar and the *dining room, a modern Steinway.* **joanne brackeen,** a pianist of the high-speed, romantic variety, performs with bassist **cecil mc bee** July 11-15. **phoebe légère,** whose assorted talents (she plays piano and accordion, has a voice of impressive size, and does campy variations on a red-hot-mama theme) have made her a favorite in both downtown and uptown spas, will be on view Sundays, and on Mondays the a-cappella group Five Play takes over. Music from nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This upstairs music and performance space opened its doors in 1986 and quickly established itself as the headquarters of the downtown music scene. (There wasn't much competition.) In the rear, there's a mini-bar stocked with herbal tea and imported beer. Up front is a small stage, occupied by **copernicus,** a fifty-year-old poet-performer who talks about himself in the third person. Copernicus' philosophy is that "nothing exists"—in the event that he's wrong and you can find the Knitting Factory, he'll be leading one of his post-everything improv bands here on July 12. Music after nine.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need *all* their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory may give them a

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

boost. **STRANGE CAVE**, a lyrical coed pop band headed by ex-Bongo guitarist-singer James Maestro, appears on July 16. **PYLON**, townsmen of R.E.M. and postpunk dignitaries in their own right, claim July 17. Led by a whirling-dervish female lead singer, they'll take you back to the heady days of early-eighties college rock. Other notables: Royal Crescent Mob on July 14; Scrawl on July 15; and **LUCINDA WILLIAMS** on July 18.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A neighborhood bar with a Woolworth next door and government-issue high rises towering above. It's a simple, unpretentious place, with wood beams, ceiling fans, and variety-pack lighting—candles, gaslights, blue track lights, orange bulbs, yellow bulbs. Some people come here for the jazz, some for the smothered chicken and collard greens, and some to check out their bar cronies. Guitarist **HIRAM BULLOCK** and his band swing into action July 14-15. Music from about ten until two. Dining.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A new, shiny, ninety-seat cabaret, sixty-five floors above all the honking and shouting. (It and the neighboring Rainbow Room—same telephone number, same stratospheric prices—are reached by taking a whistling express elevator; some people observe silence on the way up.) On clear nights, you can see the lights of Yonkers and Tenafly. Singer Julius La Rosa, who achieved instant celebrity when, in 1953, radio host Arthur Godfrey fired him on the air, exercises his Brooklyn baritone through July 22. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

SPEAKEASY, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—The kind of murky, vinyl-and-mirrors lounge one might find on a sunken ocean liner. Onstage, performers pick, strum, and fiddle, and get worked up about missing old friends and living on the run. If they're nervous, the master of ceremonies—a bearded guy in a red sweatshirt—sits at the back of the room saying things like "You're doing fine" and "*Rock* it." The Annual Bob Dylan Imitators Contest takes place on July 18. Music from about eight-thirty. Dining.

SPO-DEE-O-DEE, 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A curious mixture of swank and down-home. (The name comes from the 1949 Stick McGhee song "Drinkin' Wine Spo-dee-o-dee," a piece of rowdiness that was Atlantic Records' first hit.) The food is barbecued ribs and such, the music is mostly R. & B., and the furnishings include ballroom-size chandeliers, king-size sofas, and green velvet drapes sprinkled with stardust. On Monday nights, the New York City Swing Band sets the pace.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. The quintet of the seasoned trumpeter and flügelhornist **ART FARMER** holds court July 11-16 and again beginning July 18. Shows from ten. Dining.

ZANZIBAR & GRILL, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—The logo that appears on glasses, napkins, and matchbooks here—a bongo-playing monkey in fez and shades—embodies this pleasant restaurant-bar's blend of Africana and yuppie cool. The eponymous island is evoked by live palms, Rousseau-style murals, and etched-glass jungle scenes; Murray Hill is evoked by everything else. The schedule: guitarist **CLARENCE SHARPE** and the **ARI ROLAND** trio on July 10 and July 17; July 11-12, saxophonist-flutist **LEW TABACKIN**; the Paul Ricci quartet on July 13; the Roy Gerson sextet on July 14; Al Bundy on July 15; singer **DANIELLA** on July 16, with drummer **BOBBY SANABRIA** and bassist **CALVIN HILL**; the Joe Cocuzzo trio on July 18; and drummer **JOE MORELLO'S** trio on July 19.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Cappellini finanziera, sepia-toned photos of old Firenze, and jazz. The last emanates from a passageway between a front-room bar and a back room reserved for trenchermen. The formidable piano-bass stirrings of **HILTON RUIZ** and **JIMMY ROWSER** can be heard through July 15; **RICHARD WYANDS** and **MAJOR HOLLEY** replace them starting July 17. Music weeknights from eight. Closed Sundays.

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EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

TIGERS is a Virginia-based outfit that handles authentic party animals: lions and tigers and bears; zebras, eagles, and antelopes. Although it sent a caged panther to a party held recently by Emporio Armani to launch the store's save-the-rain-forest T-shirt, TIGERS didn't meet all of Armani's jungle needs. Other agencies provided tiny monkeys, one of which cowered near a cash register, and a green-winged macaw that was maneuvered through the crowd like an hors-d'oeuvre tray and provoked in everyone the same three questions: What's his name? (Sam.) How old is he? (Four.) Why does he have his mouth open? (He's a little hot right now.)

The animals' habitat was, well, Armazonian: vines dangled from the ceiling; inflatable snakes coiled around mannequins; Johnny Weissmuller movies played above a makeshift bar; and a young cave couple, apparently inspired by Pebbles and Bam-Bam, was commissioned to work the crowd with lines like "Have a good time, O.K.?" The store also snared a few post-Stone Age celebrities. When Justine Bateman arrived, word went around that she wasn't talking to the press (it wasn't clear if the press was talking to her), and a little later she was seen begging somebody with a video camera not to make her do a rain-forest spiel.

Too much about the party said publicity, not charity—even the T-shirts, which had Kenny Scharf's "Don't Bungle the Jungle" design on the back but "Emporio Armani" on the front. Maybe it's time for a T-shirt that says "Don't Bungle the Benefit."

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

ETHYL EICHELBERGER—With a cast of six, in his play, entitled "Herd of Buffalo." Eichelberger wears a fright wig, plays the accordion, speaks Spanish, and threatens to blow a fellow-actor to bits. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. July 13-16 at 9:30.)

FLOATING CINEMA—Bring a chair and a flashlight to Admiral Dewey Promenade, in Battery Park, and watch Marlon Brando and Eva Marie Saint in "On the Waterfront" (July 14 at 8:30). The movie will be projected onto a thirty-foot screen located on a barge in New York Harbor. Presented by the Parks Department.

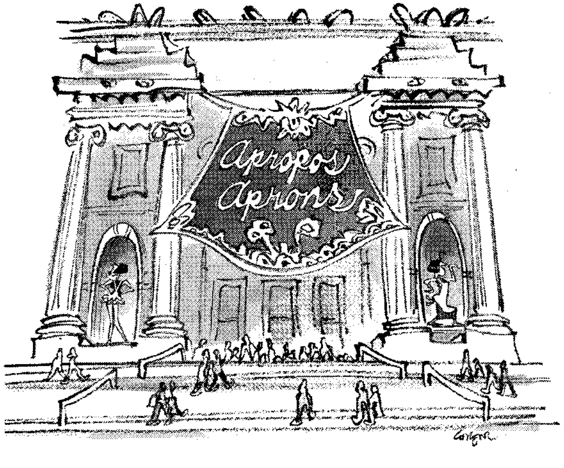
SHIMMER—A play by John O'Keefe about two boys who escape from a reformatory during the nineteen-fifties. The playwright has cast himself in every role. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. For information about tickets, call 246-0102.)

SPALDING GRAY—Contributes one of his famous monologues to Lincoln Center's Serious Fun! series. See listings under Arts Festivals, page 15.

ART

"WORDS OF BLOOD, IMAGES OF FIRE: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION," at the Pierpont Morgan Library through August 20th, is actually a cool, rather bloodless exhibition. The tricolor ribbons attached to some of the wall labels do little to jazz things up, and in fact make this installation of political cartoons, newspapers, engravings, printed speeches, pamphlets, and other documents seem perversely and provincially English—like a horse show. Yet much of the work on display is notable: Jacques-Louis David's brilliant black-chalk drawing of "Brutus Ordering the Execution of His Sons"; the death warrant of Madame du Barry, the last mistress of Louis XV; or the vitrine reserved for "political obscenity," including such scabrous, anonymous documents as the "Fureurs Utérines de Marie Antoinette" and "Soirées Amoureuses du Général Mottier et de la Belle Antoinette." General Mottier, we are reminded, is the Marquis de Lafayette, and "the tale is told by the Queen's spaniel, who bemoans the loss of her sexual favors."

Perhaps the most vivid ideological views to be found here belong to an Englishman—the satirist James Gillray, once described as a "caterpillar on the green leaf of reputation." Four of his cartoons trace the evolution of a complete political about-face, from a clarifying distance. The first, "The Offering to Liberty," is a liberal allegory—optimism *avant le déluge*—in which the King's popular Finance Minister, the reasonable, too often unheeded Necker, is depicted as Virtue. Next, we find "French Democrats Surprising the Royal Runaways," Gillray's more cynical equivalent of the 1982 movie "La Nuit de Varennes," in which everyone, radical hunters as well as royal prey, looks equally piggish. Then there is the macabre "Voltaire Instructing the Infant Jacobinism," full of skeletons and romantic penumbra, and the very image of embittered reaction. Finally, we see "Un Petit Souper à la Parisienne"—Gillray's Swiftian evocation of a little light dinner at home in the midst of the *terreur*.



Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment," a major exhibition of paintings and works on paper by this intense and elusive giant (1746-1828), proposes the artist as philosopher and political theorist. The installation is a little low on visual magic, a little long on wall labels, and of particular interest for two self-portraits: a young Goya working by the light of a candle-holding hat; an old, sick Goya attended by his physician. Through July 16. . . . ¶ Thirty-six of Lucas Samaras's works on paper from the museum's collection are on view in the Berggruen Klee Gallery of the Wallace wing (the Klee works that are usually there are at the Tate Gallery for the summer). Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "Apropos Aprons," a presentation of the Costume Institute, considers not the workaday item but apron extremes—extremely ornate examples from eighteenth-century Europe, and the extremely short Rudi Gernreich mini (1967), not to mention the Egyptian noblewoman's funerary apron, and various loincloths, girdles, pinafores, and pendant sashes. Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ An exhibition comparing photographs of the sixties with photographs of the eighties, including works by Duane Michals, Cindy Sherman, and the Starn Twins. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Twenty-five sculptures and fifteen drawings by Christopher Wilmarth (1943-87). A compact and exceptionally discomfiting retrospective. The artist's green-glass structures from the late sixties and seventies are elegant but utterly mute. The late work—mostly bronze wall reliefs with ovoid etched-glass "heads"—offers about as despairing a vision of the self as you are likely to find. Through Aug. 20. (A complementary show is at Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.) . . . ¶ Helen Frankenthaler. Individually, many of these paintings have an undeniable presence: an intensity of color and a lyric delight. But, even when Frankenthaler's prolific career is reduced to just these forty paintings, their substance begins to evaporate, and the work ends up seeming better suited to a boardroom. Through Aug. 20. . . . ¶ "California Photography: Remaking Make-Believe." (See Photography, page 13.) Through Aug. 20. . . . **Note:** The sculpture garden has reopened (after three months of renovations) with a slightly different lineup, including a monumental aluminum sculpture by Ronald Bladen. Free chamber-music concerts, performed by Juilliard students, are held here Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30; the entrance for the concerts is at 14 W. 54th St., and the gates open at 6. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A show of modest abstract collages by Hannelore Baron (1926-87) which are composed of threadlike ink lines and frayed bits of canvas and paper. Through July 23. . . . ¶ Selections from the permanent collection, including a group of sculptures by the contemporary artists Phoebe Adams, Ange Leccia, Robert Lobe, and David Nash. Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The 1989 Biennial is winding down; the remaining work can be viewed through July 16. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures." Through Sept. 18. . . . ¶ "Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters & Sculptors." . . . Concurrent with the Hispanic show is a forceful lobby installation by Alfredo Jaar, a Chilean artist living in New York. It consists of light boxes that look like black beams, edged in photographic transparencies of United States civil-rights protesters, including picketers carrying signs that read "I *AM* A MAN" and a young black man with part of his face done up in white makeup. The artfully haphazard arrangement of beams argues effectively for anti-authoritarianism in both life and art. Through Sept. 4. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—A

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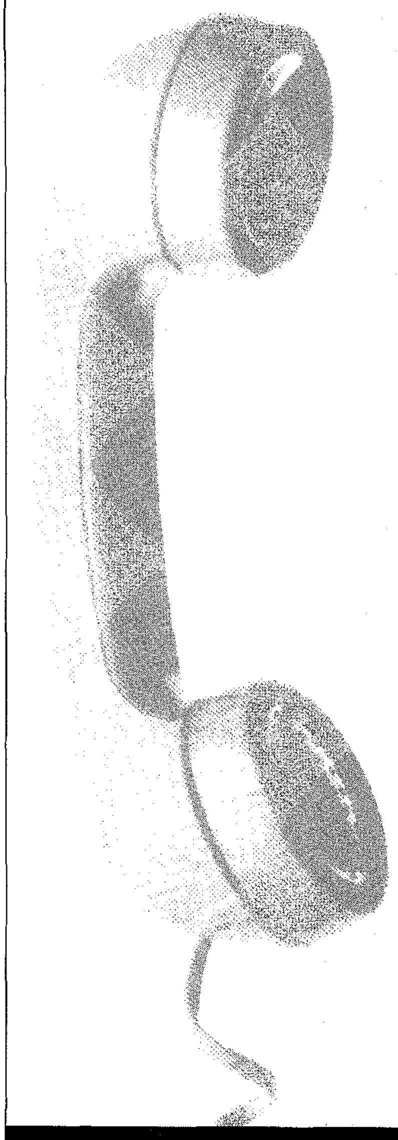

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ART—Cont'd

show of furniture by George Nakashima, a woodworker who favors an organic approach to tables, chairs, cabinets, and lamps. Through Aug. 20. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—Red Grooms: His work is about as close as art gets to real entertainment, and his graphic work—the subject of this exhibition—is no exception. Included are some delightful three-dimensional lithographs that resemble permanently opened pop-up books. Through Sept. 10. . . . ¶ Sculptor Mierle Laderman Ukeles is showing works made with recycled materials—crushed soda cans, pulped Christmas trees, shredded Wella Balsam containers. Through Sept. 4. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Two hundred years' worth of French design, in honor of the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Through July 16. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

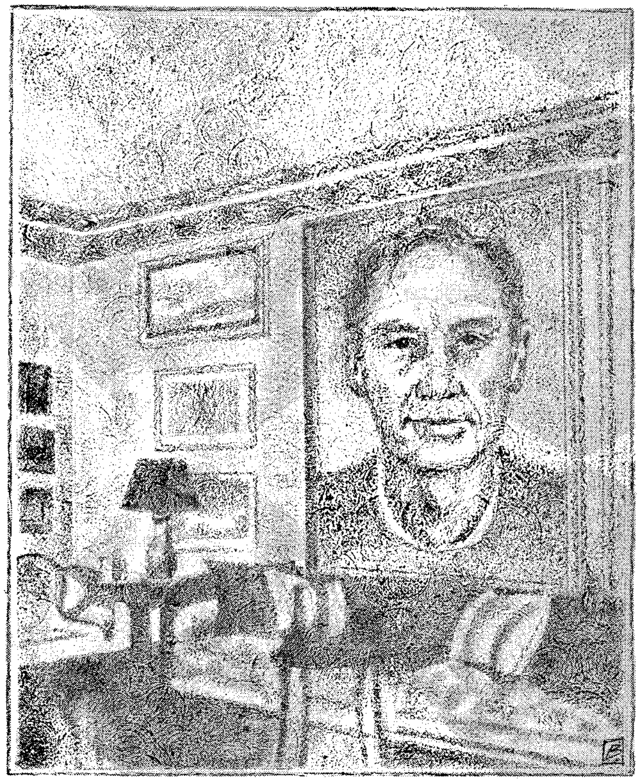
Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"In the Shadow of Conflict: Israeli Art 1980-1989"; The organizers attempted inventively to survey recent Israeli art with a pertinent political theme, but the site-specific protest art documented in the catalogue looks more interesting than most of the very earnest paintings and sculptures on view. Joshua Neustein's paintings of segmented maps of the Middle East, however, display a restrained intelligence, and Moshe Gershuni shows a great hand in his violent expressionistic paintings on paper. Through Aug. 6. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Words of Blood, Images of Fire." Through Aug. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Botanical illustrations from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, among them Georg Ehret's colored engraving "Yucca Aloifolia," a couple of Redouté watercolors and prints of his work from "Les Roses" and "Les Liliacées," and watercolors by Lilian Snelling, Mary Grierson, and Pandora Sellars. Through Sept. 2. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ The Berg Collection's new show, of a hundred first editions, letters, and manuscripts, singles out themes of love and death in English and American literature. Items such as John Keats' farewell letter to his love Fanny Brawne, E. E. Cummings' poem "Who's Most Afraid of Death?" (inscribed to his wife, Marion Morehouse), and Mark Twain's acknowledgment of sympathy expressed after the death of his youngest daughter are particularly compelling. (Berg Collection Exhibition Room. Open daily, except Thursdays and Sundays, from 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi, one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures through several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful ivy-walled garden dotted with sculptures. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Graphics and installations that incorporate photography, the work of fifteen contemporary artists. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings by the realist Hughie Lee-Smith. Both shows through Sept. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)



Richard Artschwager

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Lois Lane—Children, animals, romance, and ornament are both form and content in these pleasant-looking, beautifully produced, but insipid monoprints with collage. Also, two new paintings—semi-abstract configurations of silver swirls and smudgy areas, one including the image of a deer. Through July 14. (Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Christopher Wilmarth (1943-87)—This exhibition is a coda to the MOMA retrospective, with an emphasis on drawings rather than sculptures. The early-seventies paper pieces with folds and staples are especially good—sensuous and succinct. The later, figurative works are sometimes powerful but suggest an acrid emotionalism. Through July 28. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Center for African Art—"Wild Spirits Strong Medicine: African Art and the Wilderness." A provocative display of artifacts. It begins with pairs of objects which illustrate the contrasts between village life and wilderness, or bush, life. The village objects are refined and domesticated; the others are aggressive and exaggerated. Additional exhibits related to the wild include an extraordinary fifteen-foot snake mask. Through Aug. 20. (54 E. 68th St. Opens at noon on Sundays; closed Mondays.)

"Poelitical Object"—Twenty years of vanguard Spanish art—printed work, mostly—with a neo-Dada attitude. Joan Brossa's visual poems are especially terse and fun—there is an "O," for instance, shaped like Alfred Hitchcock's profile. Through July 22. (Spanish Institute, 684 Park Ave., at 68th St. Open daily.)

Group Shows—At **cordier & ekstrom,** 417 E. 75th St.: Most of these works, by several artists (including Romare Bearden and Isamu Noguchi), are small, and some involve collage techniques, as well as narratives that stop just short of surrealism. Through July 14. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **gagosian,** 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.: Though the main room here has only three pairs of exquisite paintings, they manage to capture some of the central painterly concerns of the sixties in a fresh way. A Frank Stella copper pin-striped canvas and a Roy Lichtenstein Benday-dotted brushstroke contrast differing concepts of gesture and image-making. A multiple Jackie and a silver double Elvis display the tragic side of Andy Warhol's portraiture, which was played down by the recent Museum of Modern Art retrospective. A Robert Ryman (from the eighties, but still appropriate to a discussion of sixties art) suggests not so much the end of painting, which this kind of work was thought to suggest at the time, as a new beginning. Through Sept. 1.

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Public Domain—There's a political edge to all the works in this odd exhibition of exemplary public-oriented art. Richard Artschwager is represented by a model for an ambitious public sculpture—a plaza, actually—which consists of a windowed monolith that can be viewed on one side from an armchair and on the other from three very tall straight-backed chairs; the grouping is as dramatic and rigid as Fascist architecture. In a more populist spirit, Dennis Adams displays the model of a bus shelter he constructed for Toronto; its illuminated panel depicts native North Americans protesting for land rights on the steps of the Peace Tower, in Ottawa, while Mounties block the building's entrance. An eloquent defense of art as a catalyst for public exchange is to be found in Hans Haacke's photo-panels with text, which document a work he installed in a Graz square last year—the piece confronted Austrians with their collaboration with the Nazis—and the intense, opposing reactions to it, which included a firebombing. Through Aug. 31. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Artists' Artists"—Recent drawings and monotypes by Joseph Goldyne and Joyce Treiman. Revered predecessors such as William Merritt Chase, Winslow Homer, and Gustave Caillebotte are given their due by these two literal and unleavened realists. Caveat emptor: Treiman, with a self-portrait, has put herself into this pantheon. Through July 23. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the **de nagy,** 41 W. 57th St.: Landscapes by eleven painters and a sculptor. The over-all atmosphere is subdued and relentlessly poetic. It's also foreboding in the case of Nachume Miller and John Bowman, and elegiac and mannered in the case of the suddenly very popular Chris Pfister (seen recently in a huge show at Bess Cutler). Through July 27. . . . **marian goodman,** 24 W. 57th St.: Sculpture with conceptual tendencies, from 1968 to the present, by such artists as Giovanni Anselmo, Richard Artschwager, Lothar Baumgarten, Luciana Fabro, Rebecca Horn, Claes Oldenburg, Giulio Paolini, Giuseppe Penone, and Lawrence Weiner.

AT EASE

If pyramids had patios, they might look something like "Sitting/Stance," Richard Artschwager's new work just off the Battery Park City esplanade. Two Egyptoid granite thrones are set out in the sun with a couple of wooden lounge chairs (each big enough for two pharaohs working on their tans) and some picnic tables of brushed stainless steel.

Artschwager's mixture of the upright and the laid back plays with the contradictory atmosphere of Battery Park City itself. The new residential buildings, modelled after those around Gramercy Park and Gracie Square, recall the social formality of an earlier New York, while the riverside location brings out the jogging suits, headbands, and pumped-up torsos of today's unbuttoned public style. The effort it takes to conform to the new dress code is enough to make anyone want to sit down.

Artschwager's filing cabinet, with its motif of ornaments suggesting winged messengers at different stages of alertness and exhaustion, may elicit the quickest smile in this altogether witty and elegant show. Through July 28. . . . **MARLBOROUGH,** 40 W. 57th St.: A big sampler of mostly gallery artists, many represented by work with a summer theme. Of these, Larry Rivers' two portraits—of a jazz musician naked in his hot hotel room, and of a woman in shorts lolling languorously on a porch—make the best, sultriest point. Through Sept. 16. . . . **GALERIE ST. ETIENNE,** 24 W. 57th St.: This show honors Otto Kallir, the founder of the Galerie St. Etienne, as much for his pioneering exhibitions of the Austrian Expressionists as for his fascination with the documentation of this century's profound events. In addition to a gorgeous watercolor of a girl by Emil Nolde, an intense self-portrait by the little-known Richard Gerstl (whom Kallir discovered after the artist committed suicide at age twenty-five), and some fascinating paintings by the composer Arnold Schoenberg, we see Charles Lindbergh's application for an airplane license, Robert E. Peary's telegram confirming the "discovery" of the North Pole, and written recollections of Adolf Hitler, the artist, by Reinhold Hanisch. Hanisch sold Hitler's watercolors in the teens, and in the thirties was Kallir's restorer, prior to the dealer's flight from his native Austria. Through Sept. 8. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **PACE,** 32 E. 57th St.: "Sculpture by Painters," many of whom are gallery artists, including Condo, de Kooning, Dine, Dubuffet, Johns, Kelly, Lichtenstein, Miró, Morley, Newman, Picasso, Schnabel, Twombly, and Warhol. Condo, who is new to the medium, makes an auspicious début in this handsome exhibition. Through Sept. 1.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Ed Albers / Alexis Rockman—Recent paintings and drawings by two younger *fleuristes du mal.* Albers' work has a dry, etched-in look, while Rockman's is sleekly wet-on-wet and possessed of a naughtier, more finely honed sense of humor than he has revealed before. Through July 14. (Fawbush, 568 Broadway.)

James O. Clark—These powerful sculptures are assembled from machinery parts and fluorescent or neon lights. The pieces are strong and vulnerable, eerie and beautiful, and come from a mature, rarely heard voice. Through July 14. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Leo Copers—A show of found, and altered, objects by a versatile Belgian conceptualist, including a sidewise chandelier, a ghostly cocktail table, and other skewed signs of a not so discreet bourgeoisie. Through July 21. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

Yury Dyshlenko—Big recent paintings, in a hyper-realistic but non-static street-photographer style, which seems to build from earlier, officially approved Soviet realist genres while avoiding any sense of monumentalism. These are interesting, anxious pictures. Through July 28. (Kind, 136 Greene St. Closed Mondays.)

Jacqueline Humphries—Recent paintings. In her first and promising solo show, this artist amplifies, reduces, distorts, and drips over Poonsian dots, while also imbuing her canvases with some lush colors. Through July 14. (Good, 532 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

Inigo Jones (1573-1652)—An impeccable scholarly display of lovely ink drawings by the great Palladio-influenced Elizabethan architect. Through July 22. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8; closed Mondays.)

Roy Lichtenstein—This invigorating exhibition brings together all of the Pop master's bronzes (1976-89), an underappreciated aspect of his oeuvre. Such classic Lichtenstein images as mirrors, brushstrokes, and drinking glasses are flat pictorial reliefs that have to do more with Cubist painting than with sculpture in the round. The bronzes have all the charm and wit of the artist's best paintings and are marvels of abstract composition. Through July 29. (65 Thompson Street Gallery. Open Saturdays.)

Joni Mabe—The walls of this obsessive installation are covered with country 45s, old license plates, and ticky-tacky memorabilia. Altars made of rusted bed frames and edged in frosted half-tires occupy most of the floor. Books documenting the artist's obsession with Elvis—one includes a snapshot of her wearing a sleeveless dress that is smothered in Elvis buttons—are more interesting than most of the standard faux-naïf fare here; two exceptions are the actual tiara Edith Massey wore in "Pink Flamingos" and a calendar from the Shakir Barber Shop. Through July 14. (O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Opens at noon Tuesdays through Fridays.)

Group Shows—At the **ALA,** 560 Broadway: The six artists here have worked in various materials, but in these sculptures and paintings fake fur is king. Pino Pascali, an Arte Povera artist who died in 1968, covered large wood zigzag panels with it to form a very phallic-looking worm that is over thirty feet long. Eric Bainbridge used it to swathe a huge animal sculpture, "The Twentieth Century," that has a duck's body, a bunny's tail, a mechanical nut for a head, and suction cups for feet. It is part Trojan horse, part Tower of Babel, and part Frankenstein's monster. Through July 28. . . . **GORNEY,** 100 Greene St.: A certain historicism prevails here: straightforward, moody photographs by James Welling of some wonderful buildings by the American architect H. H. Richardson; Justen Ladda's perspectival trick piece, involving two male figures, a chair, and what is meant to suggest a mirror; a black-and-white painting by Peter Nagy that's a kind of graphic version of an Intimist interior; a beautiful small fountain by R. M. Fischer cast in industrial metals and made up of shapes that evoke the fixtures of days gone by; and the pièce de résistance, Joel Otterson's "Coffee-table Museum," a friendly, semi-functional beverage caddie constructed with copper pipes, a big slab of natural-burled wood, and dozens of cups, saucers, teapots, and coffee makers representing a wide variety of brewing techniques, nationalities, and period styles—a veritable table of babble for the civilized sipper. Through July 28. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **LENNON, WEINBERG,** 580 Broadway: An exhibition of works on paper by Joan Mitchell, Willem de Kooning, John Chamberlain, Brice Marden, Malcolm Morley, Louise Fishman, Donald Lipski, Chuck Connelly, Catherine Murphy, and H. C. Westermann. Lipski—always peculiar—and the weird, wondrous Westermann deliver interesting quirks. Through Aug. 11. . . . **WEBER,** 142 Greene St.: Members of what we are meant to see as two generations of conceptual artists are united in this summer gathering. The oldies take the cake: Sol LeWitt's white box structure from 1969-75, Daniel Buren's "A Frame in a Frame in a Frame for a Frame"—a site-specific wall piece of asymmetrically arranged yellow beach-awning stripes against a slate-colored wall—and Hamish Fulton's framed photographs of wildernesses where he walked, are very elegant works, each quite coolly sublime in its way. Works in mixed media by Franz Erhard Walther, Wallace & Donohue, Massimo Antonaci, and Magdalena Jetelova—the younger guard—look pretty good, too, but a little gimmicky and unfocussed by comparison. Also, in the small gallery, there are beautiful prints by Robert Ryman, theologist of colors white. Through Aug. 25.

PHOTOGRAPHY

LIKE any show that takes a place for its theme, "California Photography," at the Museum of Modern Art, is tricky. But it has an intelligent, multi-layered approach. It includes pieces by seven photographers, and while there is a definite reason for each of them to be there, some of the pictures don't seem all that peculiar to California. Those that do are open to the criticism that they simply reinforce clichés. Nevertheless, it's those very clichés that provide the vigor and resonance to the best pictures in the show—by John Baldessari, Larry Johnson, and Larry Sultan.

Although pink is the color of the exhibition's entrance marquee, it is blue that makes the biggest statement. The first piece the viewer sees is by Baldessari; it involves a six-foot aquamarine cutout image of a strapless fifties dress. The last work, by Johnson, is made up of six turquoise rectangles, each a background of sky and clouds imprinted with the name of a movie star—five out of six came to a bad end. On another wall are Larry Sultan's stills taken from three decades of his family's home movies. The theme of water is a kind of glue holding these shots (and, one senses, the family) together; many shades of blue appear. These three photographers produce imagery that is different from the other body of blue pictures associated with California and photography—David Hockney's swimming-pool scenarios (not on display here). Hockney shows the kinds of settings in which people "take meetings" about their next make-believe project, and what we get is a study of surface. Baldessari, Johnson, and Sultan bring to the surface what lies below, and pointedly live up to the show's subtitle, "Remaking Make-Believe."

Harry Callahan / Barbara Morgan—Selections of color shots from 1978 to 1987 are arranged with some of Callahan's earlier, black-and-white photographs. The exhibition brings out this accomplished photographer's vision, which is so centered that he can afford to experiment. The result is a body of work that's never static, but that also has a consistent core. / This collection of prints, drawings, watercolors, and photographs shows Morgan's unswerving commitment to the idea of modern art as a vehicle for discovery. There are derivative pieces and there are powerful original works. None of them are flat. Through July 16. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

John Eberson—In the twenties, Eberson designed theatres that were decorated as Moorish fantasies, or had qualities found in Persian or Italian architecture; here are technical drawings and photographs of several of them. Through July 28. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

John L. Murphy / Fred W. McDarrah—Murphy gets the ideas for his studio-made tableaux from studying goings on at Coney Island. / Prints of Greenwich Village in the fifties and sixties and portraits of some of the figures (Bob Dylan, Jack Kerouac, Franz Kline) who worked there then. Through Aug. 6. (Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park, Flushing. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10 to 5; Thursdays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

Stephen Shore / Nancy Hellebrand—Rich color and crisp detail are what come to mind when we think about Shore's work, and these landscapes taken in Scotland and Texas are no exception. They certainly have a virtuoso technique, but they feel a bit too obedient to what is expected of a serious photographer at present. / Hellebrand's images of writing are dynamic examples of photography as drawing. The background textures have the effect of making the sweeps of line look as if they were on handmade paper, thus reinforcing our sense of the presence of the hand. Some of the writing in these pictures is legible, some is not; sometimes the more abstract markings look like lines in a graph, and sometimes like calligraphy. The variety of expression in Hellebrand's images made us want to see a fresh show that would bring together visual artists who have worked with language—there are so many of them, and the subject could do with more exploration. Through Aug. 30. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

Short List—**THOMAS FREDERICK ARNDT,** Photofind, 138 Spring St., opens at noon Tuesdays through Fridays (through Aug. 4); **BERNARD FAUCON** and **PIERRE REIMER,** Castelli, 578 Broadway (through July 21); **MARTINE FRANCK,** French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. (through Aug. 31); **DAVID JOYCE** and **TINA WHITE,** Pfeifer, 568 Broadway (through July 28); **ROBERT SHEEHAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Aug. 25); **TODD WATTS,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through July 28).

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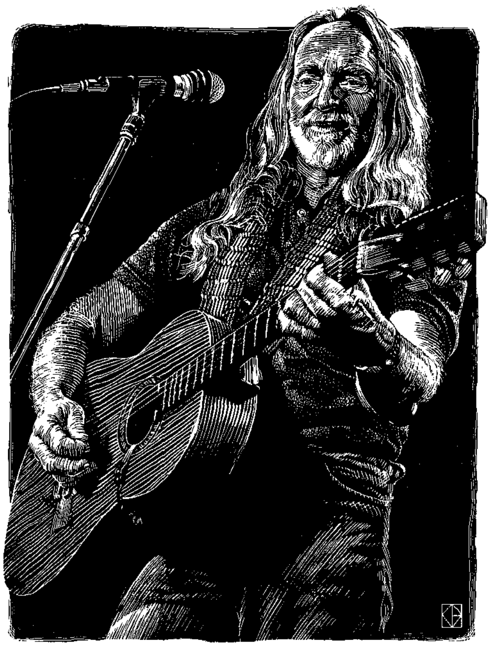


Willie Nelson at Riverstage

THE Mostly Mozart Festival glides into action this week with a program of unusually consistent sheen. The regulation stars are lined up for the first week (Itzhak Perlman, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Alicia de Larrocha); the repertory blends familiar Mozart with familiar Mendelssohn, familiar Beethoven, a bit of unfamiliar Mozart, and miscellaneous minor pleasantries by contemporaries of those masters. It will be the usual Mostly Mozart formula, in other words, but this year it seems to have come out of the processor with a smoother texture than before. Is there any way to liven things up here? Some kind of initiative might be taken in the area of the original-instrument revival; in that department, Mostly Mozart next month offers, on the same program, Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" and his "Gloria." One could run a contest to see whether anyone can think of a more conservative program.

No doubt much of the festival will be lovely and almost all of it accomplished, but we find ourselves more inclined to venture off our usual circuit and try out the jazz concerts at Carnegie Hall (July 10, 12, and 14) and the 92nd Street Y (July 18-20 and July 25-27), or perhaps even to go to Alice Tully Hall July 14-16 (armed with a good book just in case) to hear what sort of music Philip Glass might have written for "The Fall of the House of Usher."

IN TOWN

New York City Opera—**DON GIOVANNI,** with Elizabeth Holleque, Frances Ginsberg, Erie Mills, and John Cheek; conducted by Sergiu Comissiona. (July 11 at 8.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Jane Bunnell, David Eisler, and Thomas Woodman; Sergiu Comissiona. (July 12 at 8.) . . . **MADAME BUTTERFLY,** with Catherine Lamy, Cynthia Rose, John Absalom, and Kenneth Shaw; Imre Pallo. (July 13 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with Maureen O'Flynn, Susanne Marsee, Pablo Elvira, and Paul Hartfield; Scott Bergeson. (July 14 at 8.) . . . **THE MERRY WIDOW,** with Michele McBride, Ruth Golden, Richard Muenz, and Paul Austin Kelly; Imre Pallo. (July 15 at 2.) . . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** with Elizabeth Hynes, Elizabeth Carter, Walter MacNeil, and Stephen Dickson; Scott Bergeson. (July 15 at 8.) . . . **CANDIDE,** with Cyndia Sieden, Maris Clement, Muriel Costa-Greenspon, and Mark Bendert; Stanley Silverman. (July 18 at 8.) . . . With Lisa Saffer, Maris Clement, Brooks Almy, and Robert Tate; Stanley Silverman. (July 19 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—Opening concerts of the series, which will run through Aug. 26. July 11-12: Gerard Schwarz conducting the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, with Itzhak Perlman, violin. . . . ¶ July 13: Mr. Perlman, violin, and Joseph Kalichstein, piano, performing works by Mozart and Schubert. . . . ¶ July 14-15: Gerard Schwarz conducting the orchestra, with Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute, and Jean-Bernard Pommier, piano. . . . ¶ July 17: Chamber music, with Mr. Rampal and Shigenori Kudo, flute; Michaela Paetsch, violin; Eric Bartlett, cello; and John Steele Ritter, harpsichord and piano. . . . ¶ July 18-19: Gerard Schwarz conducting the orchestra, with Roberta Alexander, soprano, and Alicia de Larrocha, piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Evenings at 8.)

Camerata Köln—An original-instruments chamber group in its New York début. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. July 19 at 5:45.)

OUT OF TOWN

Caramoor Music Festival—July 13 at 4:15: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble performing works by Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Mozart, and Mendelssohn. . . . ¶ July 14 at 9: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, with Deborah Hoffman, harp. . . . ¶ July 15 at 8:30: The Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Philippe Entremont, conductor and pianist, and Ms. Hoffman, harp. . . . ¶ July 16 at 5:30: Elmar Oliveira, violin, in a program that includes works by Mozart and Prokofiev. (Katonah, N.Y. Through Aug. 20. Trains that leave Grand Central on Saturdays at 2:48 and 5:48, and on Sundays at 3:48, are met at Katonah by buses for Caramoor. For information about tickets and trains, call 1-914 232-5035.)

Waterloo Festival Orchestra—This week's program, featuring works by Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Schumann, is conducted by Karl Anton Rickenbacher. With Eugene Istomin, piano. (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. 1-201 347-4700. July 15 at 8:30.)

Tanglewood—July 13 at 8:30: Mitsuko Uchida, piano, in a solo recital of works by Schubert and Debussy. . . . ¶ July 14 at 9: Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra. . . . ¶ July 15 at 8:30: Jesús López-Cobos conducting the orchestra, with Rudolf Firkušný, piano. . . . ¶ July 16 at 2:30: Lukas Foss conducting the orchestra, with James Galway, flute. (Lenox, Mass. Through Aug. 27. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Kassav'—With Mory Kante, Niagara, and Jean-Paul Gaultier. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. July 14 at 8.)

Samantha Fox—Palladium. July 15 at 8.

New Order—With Public Image Ltd. and the Sugarcubes. (Meadowlands. 1-201 935-3900. July 19 at 7:30.)

Jazz at Carnegie Hall—July 10: The All-Star Jazz Orchestra's tribute to Duke Ellington, conducted by Maurice Peress and Frank Wess. . . . ¶ July 12: A program of music by George Antheil, with Charles Castleman, the Mendelssohn String Quartet, the Palais Royale All-Star Jazz Band, and others. Conducted by Mr. Peress. . . . ¶ July 14: "The Clef Club Concert," with William Warfield; the Boys Choir of Harlem; Barbara Conrad, mezzo-soprano; and others. Conducted by Mr. Peress. (247-7800. Evenings at 8, with pre-concert lectures at 7.)

"Jazz in July"—The first two in a series of six concerts. July 18 at 8: Walt Levinsky and the Great American Swing Band, with Lynn Roberts, Bob Haggart, and Dick Hyman. . . . ¶ July 19 at 8: The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra, the Roof Garden Jass Band, and Vince

Giordano & the Nighthawks. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

ARTS FESTIVALS

SUMMERFARE—STARY THEATRE: Presenting "Hamlet IV" (July 11 and July 14 at 8) and "The Dybbuk," by Szymon Anski (July 12-13 and July 15 at 8). Both are in Polish, with simultaneous English translation, and both are directed by Andrzej Wajda. . . . **COSÌ FAN TUTTE:** Peter Sellars' version, conducted by Craig Smith. (July 13 at 8 and July 16 at 2:30.) . . . **DON GIOVANNI:** More Mozart from Sellars and Smith. (July 15 at 8.) . . . **THE GREAT DICTATOR:** The Charlie Chaplin film. (July 19 at 8:30.) (State University of New York at Purchase. Through Aug. 6. For information about tickets call 1-914 253-5900.)

SERIOUS FUN!—Opening performances of a three-week festival that will run through Aug. 3. **"THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER,"** a chamber opera by Philip Glass, with a libretto by Arthur Yorinks. Directed by Richard Foreman. (July 14 at 7:30, and July 15-16 at 8.) . . . **SPALDING GRAY,** in "Terrors of Pleasure—the Uncut Version." (July 18-19 at 8.) (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

YANKEES—Vs. the Kansas City Royals, with rookie Luis de los Santos, who used to live on 172nd Street in Manhattan. July 13 at 1, July 14 at 4:30 (a twi-night doubleheader), July 15 at 12, and July 16 at 1:30.

METS—Vs. the Houston Astros, July 17 at 5:05 (a twi-night doubleheader), and July 18-19 at 7:35.

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

HORSES—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. Through July 31. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30. . . . At the Atlantic City Race Course: Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:15. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. Through Aug. 19. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Mondays through Saturdays at 7:45.

CARS—The Marlboro Grand Prix, at the Meadowlands. 1-201 935-3900. Qualifying heats are July 14-15. Finals start July 16 at 1.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"DINOSAURS ALIVE!"—A mostly-for-kids show of robotic half-size dinosaurs which has managed to cause a scholarly scuffle—not everyone agrees on what kind of skin markings dinosaurs had, for instance. The subjects here are covered with charcoal-colored blotches. Along with all the wandering eyeballs and craning necks, you'll find a translucent lava spill, plenty of ferns and fake rocks, and a basic jungle soundtrack—lots of roaring and an occasional caw-caw. "Dinosaurs Alive!" covers moments of birth (a parasaurolphus rocks out of an egg) and death (a deinonychus has at a felled prey). There's a particularly inspired bit at the outset when a pair of stegosauruses feast on Battery Park City. The stegosauruses were herbivores, but when you're hungry you're hungry. (2 World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Mondays and Tuesdays, 9 to 6, and Wednesdays through Saturdays, 9 to 9.)

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

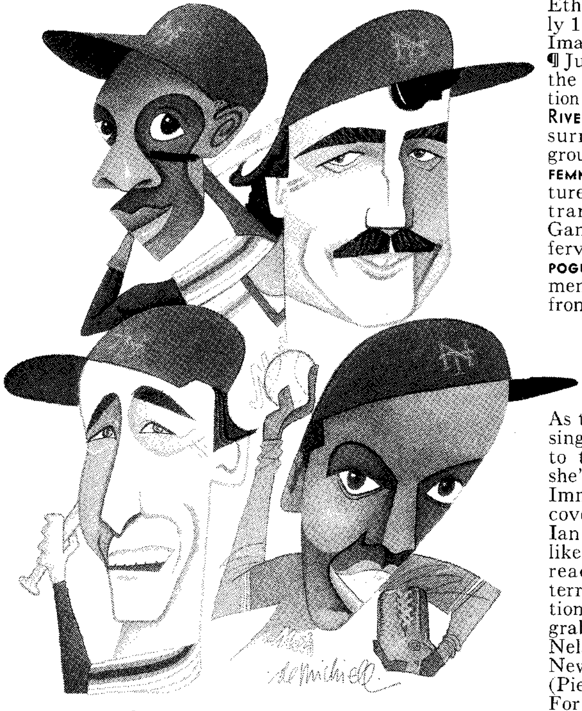
LE QUATORZE JUILLET—To celebrate the storming of the Bastille, the people of New York are invited, on July 14, to storm Lincoln Center Plaza, which will be dressed up like a Parisian street fair. Starting at 2:45, you can wander round the vicinity of the fountain and linger at whatever catches your eye—cancan dancers, a zydeco band, concertina players, or kiosks stocked with French-style food. Later that afternoon, the main attraction will be a group of jugglers, clowns, and acrobats imported from Montreal, and in the evening the sun in the constellation of festivities will be "Tales of Exile," a dance piece commissioned by the French government and choreographed by Ruby Shang and Gilberte Tsai. Sara Lee, the corporate sponsor of the celebration, hopes to make it possible for everyone at the Plaza to eat cake.

WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER—July 12 at 6:30: Buster Poindexter and his Banshees of Blue. . . . ¶ July 16 at 2: St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble. . . . ¶ July 19 at 6:30: The Horseflies. (Battery Park City. No tickets necessary.)

CENTRAL PARK BAND SHELL—July 13 at 7: The New York Grand Opera's production of Puccini's "Il Trittico"; conducted by Vincent La Selva. . . . ¶ July 14 at 8:30: Lynda Barry and Jump Sister Jump. . . . ¶ July 15 at 3: Lucinda Williams. . . . ¶ July 16 at 3: Mahlathini and Mahotella Queens. (Mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 860-1335.)

JONES BEACH THEATRE—July 15 at 8: Among all this summer's rock reunion tours, the appearance of a reconstituted **LITTLE FEAT** is perhaps the most welcome. After a respectful ten-year pause following the death of their leader, Lowell George, the kings of supple boogie are back with a strong album, "Let It Roll," and, if history is any guide, a live show that should be as much fun as a moonlight drive along the Gulf Coast in a vintage convertible. Melissa Etheridge is also on the bill. . . . ¶ July 12 at 7:30: New Order, with Public Image Ltd. and the Sugarcubes. . . . ¶ July 14 at 8: Jimmy Buffett, with the Neville Brothers. (For information about tickets, call 1-516 221-1000.)

RIVERSTAGE—July 18 at 7: A slightly surreal pairing of acoustic rock groups. Wisconsin's all-boy **VIOLENT FEMMES** are a bouncy trio that features the nervous voice and jittery transports of songwriter Gordon Gano, whose lyrics combine gospel fervor and anguished paranoia. **THE POGUES** play traditional Irish instruments at breakneck speed, and are fronted by the worst teeth in show business—Shane MacGowan's. His raspy voice and disreputable sentiments suggest an eighteenth-century Johnny Rotten. . . . ¶ July 19 at 7:30: As the best known of evangelical pop singers, **AMY GRANT** usually preaches to the converted; to her rapt fans, she's the diva of Christian rock, the Immaterial Girl. But lately she's been covering Jimmy Webb and Janis Ian songs, writing excellent unhymnlike originals, and making a credible reach for the middle-of-the-road territory that Linda Ronstadt's defection to standards has left up for grabs. . . . ¶ July 12 at 7:30: Willie Nelson. . . . ¶ July 15 at 7:30: Royal New York Doo-Wopp Spectacular. (Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. For information about tickets, call 757-3100.)



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through July 13: "Imitation of Life" (1959, directed by Douglas Sirk), with Lana Turner.
From July 14: "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" (†). Closed Mondays.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 3: "Batman" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman.

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
"Batman" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
Theatre 2: "Great Balls of Fire!" (Jim McBride), with Dennis Quaid and Winona Ryder.
Theatre 3: Through July 13: "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy. From July 14: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Ghostbusters II" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (Joe Johnston), with Rick Moranis.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through July 11: "Heathers" (†).
From July 12: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman.
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello and Lee.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello and Lee.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ghostbusters II" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dead Poets Society" (†).
Theatre 3: "Dead Poets Society" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Lawrence of Arabia" (†).
Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through July 11: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.
From July 12: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy.
Theatre 2: Through July 13: "Vampire's Kiss" (†). From July 14: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Great Balls of Fire!" (Jim McBride), with Dennis Quaid and Winona Ryder.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Ghostbusters II" (†).

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: Through July 13: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†). From July 14: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (Joe Johnston), with Rick Moranis.
Theatre 2: "Batman" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
Through July 11: "Funny" (directed by Bran Ferren), a documentary.
From July 12: "Jimi Plays Monterey" (1986, D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus).

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Field of Dreams" (†).
Theatre 2: "Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman.
Theatre 2: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello and Lee.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (Joe Johnston), with Rick Moranis.
Theatre 2: Through July 13: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids." From July 14: "Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.
Theatre 3: "The Navigator: An Odyssey Across Time" (Vincent Ward).
Theatre 4: "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd.
Theatre 1: From July 14: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.
Theatre 2: From July 14: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.
Theatre 3: From July 14: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman.
Theatre 4: From July 14: "Weekend at Bernie's."
Theatre 5: From July 14: "Lethal Weapon 2."
Theatre 6: From July 14: "Lethal Weapon 2."

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 13: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover. From July 14: "Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello and Lee.
Theatre 3: Through July 13: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita. From July 14: "Field of Dreams" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello and Lee.
Theatre 3: "Do the Right Thing."

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through July 13: "Dangerous Liaisons" (†).
From July 14: "Scandal" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through July 13: "Scandal" (†).
From July 14: "Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (*265-2520*)
"Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Milk and Honey" (Rebecca Yates and Glen Salzman), with Josette Simon.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Les Misérables" (1957, Jean-Paul Le Chanois; in French), with Jean Gabin.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Great Balls of Fire!" (Jim McBride), with Dennis Quaid and Winona Ryder.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Little Vera" (Vasily Pichul; in Russian), with Natalya Negoda.
Theatre 2: "Chocolat" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Music Teacher" (Gérard Corbiau; in French).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Taxing Woman's Return" (Juzo Itami; in Japanese), with Nobuko Miyamoto.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Ghostbusters II" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
Theatre 3: "Dead Poets Society" (†).
Theatre 4: Through July 13: "Batman" (†). From July 14: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton.
Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.
Theatre 6: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (Joe Johnston), with Rick Moranis.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman.
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello and Lee.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "No Holds Barred" (directed by Thomas J. Wright), with Hulk Hogan.
Theatre 3: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman.
Theatre 4: "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" (Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor.
Theatre 5: "Vampire's Kiss" (†).
Theatre 6: "Field of Dreams" (†).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (Joe Johnston), with Rick Moranis.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: July 10: "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy. From July 11: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 13: "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier." From July 14: "Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.
Theatre 4: July 10: "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier." From July 11: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
July 10: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
July 11-13: Theatre closed.
From July 14: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (Spike Lee), with Danny Aiello and Lee.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Lawrence of Arabia" (†).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2."

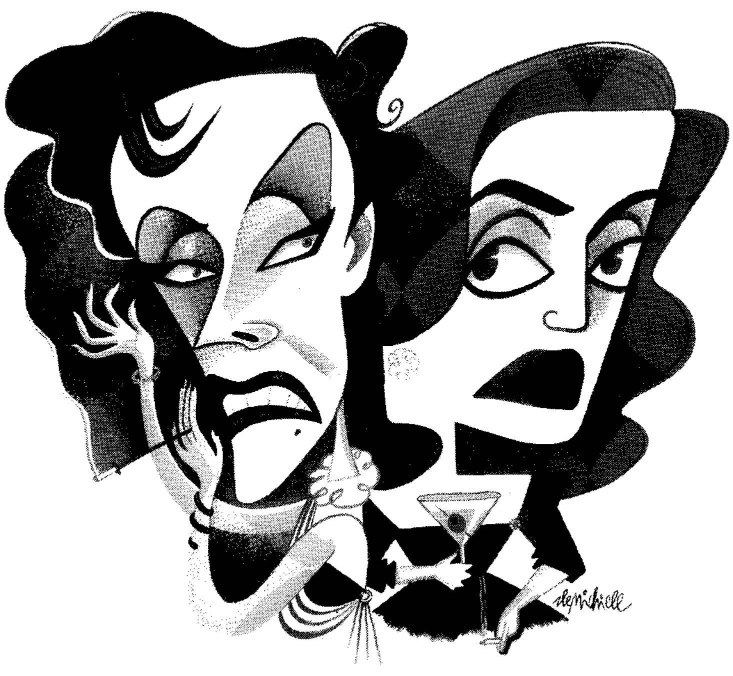
REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
July 10: "My Favorite Wife" (1940, directed by Garson Kanin), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, Gail Patrick, and Randolph Scott; and "The Talk of the Town" (1942, George Stevens), with Grant, Jean Arthur, and Ronald Colman.
July 11-12: "The Pride of the Yankees" (1942, Sam Wood), with Gary Cooper, Teresa Wright, Walter Brennan, and Dan Duryea; and "High Noon" (1952, Fred Zinnemann), with Cooper, Thomas Mitchell, Grace Kelly, Lloyd Bridges, and Katy Jurado.
July 13: "Devil and the Deep" (1932, Marion Gering), with Tallulah Bankhead, Charles Laughton, Gary Cooper, and Cary Grant; and "Hot Saturday" (1932, William A. Seiter), with Nancy Carroll, Grant, Randolph Scott, and Edward Wood.
July 14-15: "The Awful Truth" (1937, Leo McCarey), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy; and "Holiday" (1938, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, Grant, Lew Ayres, Edward Everett Horton, and Doris Nolan.
July 16-17: "Love in the Afternoon" (†); and "An Affair to Remember" (1957, Leo McCarey), with Cary Grant, Deborah Kerr, and Richard Denning.
July 18-19: "Gunga Din" (1939, George Stevens), with Cary Grant, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Victor McLaglen; and "Sergeant York" (1941, Howard Hawks), with Grant, Walter Brennan, Joan Leslie, George Tobias, and Ward Bond.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through July 11: Two programs of cartoons shown each day.
July 12-13: "Wise Blood" (1979, John Huston), with Brad Dourif, Ned Beatty, Harry Dean Stanton, and Amy Wright; and "Moby Dick" (1956, Huston), with Gregory Peck, Richard Basehart, Orson Welles, and Leo Genn.
July 14-15: "The Lair of the White Worm" (1988, Ken Russell); and "Crimes of Passion" (1984, Russell), with Kathleen Turner and Anthony Perkins.
July 16: "The Damned" (1969, Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, and Helmut Berger; and "Death in Venice" (1971, Visconti), with Bogarde.
July 17-18: Two programs of cartoons shown each day.
From July 19: "The Moderns" (1988, Alan Rudolph), with Keith Carradine, John Lone, Linda Fiorentino, Geraldine Chaplin, Geneviève Bujold, and Wallace Shawn; and "Trouble in Mind" (†).

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
July 10: Three films by Chantal Akerman, all in French—"On Tour with Pina Bausch" (1982), "J'ai Faim, J'ai Froid" (1984), and "Saute Ma Ville" (1968).
July 11-12: Three Akerman films—"News from Home" (1976), "Hotel Monterey" (1972, silent), and "La Chambre" (1972, silent).
July 13-15: "Je Tu Il Elle" (1974, Chantal Akerman; in French); and "Les Années 80" (1983, Akerman; in French).
July 16-18: "Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles" (1975, Chantal Akerman; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.
From July 19: "Carnival of Souls" (1962, Herk Harvey); and "Curse of the Demon" (1958, Jacques Tourneur), with Dana Andrews, Peggy Cummins, and Niall MacGinnis.

Seaport Cinema, 210 Front St. (608-7889)
July 10: "Nosferatu, the Vampyre" (1979, Werner Herzog; in German), with Klaus Kinski, Isabelle Adjani, and Bruno Ganz; and "The Fearless Vampire Killers" (1967, Roman Polanski), with Jack MacGowran and Sharon Tate.
July 11-13: "Children of Paradise" (1945, Marcel Carné; in French), with Jean-Louis Barrault, Arletty, Pierre Brasseur, and Maria Casarès.
July 14-17: "Pelle the Conqueror" (1988, Billie August; in Danish and Swedish), with Max von Sydow.
From July 18: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, and Elisabeth Depardieu; and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French), with Montand, Daniel Auteuil, and Emmanuelle Béart.



Swanson meets Davis at the Theatre 80 St. Marks

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
July 10: "The Last Picture Show" (1971, Peter Bogdanovich), with Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, and Cloris Leachman; and "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (1988, Francis Ford Coppola), with Bridges.
July 11: "The Magician" (1958, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ingrid Thulin, Max von Sydow, Bibi Andersson, and Gunnar Björnstrand; and "The Doll" (1964, Arne Matteson; in Swedish), with Per Oscarsson.
July 12: "Pickup on South Street" (1953, Samuel Fuller), with Richard Widmark, Jean Peters, and Thelma Ritter; and "Scandal Sheet" (1952, Phil Karlson), with Broderick Crawford and Donna Reed.
July 13: "Viridiana" (1961, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal; and "The Exterminating Angel" (1962, Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Pinal.
July 14-15: "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (1987, Stephen Frears), with Ayub Khan Din, Frances Barber, and Shashi Kapoor; and "My Beautiful Laundrette" (†).
July 16: "Seduced and Abandoned" (1964, Pietro Germi; in Italian); and "La Visita" (1966, Antonio Pietrangeli; in Italian), with Sandra Milo and François Périer.
July 17: "Stella Maris" (1918, Marshall Neilan; silent), with Mary Pickford; and "The Little American" (1917, Cecil B. De Mille; silent), with Pickford.
July 18: "Broken Strings" (1940, L. C. Borden); and "Jericho" ("Dark Sands"; 1938, Thornton Freeland), with Paul Robeson.
July 19: "The Burglar" (1957, Paul Wendkos), with Jayne Mansfield, Dan Duryea, and Martha Vickers; and "Nightfall" (1957, Jacques Tourneur), with Aldo Ray, Brian Keith, and Anne Bancroft.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 10: "Circle of Deceit" (1982, Volker Schlöndorff; in German), with Bruno Ganz and Hanna Schygulla; and "The Tin Drum" (1980, Schlöndorff; in German), with David Bennent.
July 11: "The Sun Also Rises" (1957, Henry King), with Tyrone Power, Ava Gardner, Errol Flynn, Mel Ferrer, and Eddie Albert; and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1952, King), with Gregory Peck, Susan Hayward, and Gardner.
July 12: "Red River" (1948, Howard Hawks), with Montgomery Clift, John Wayne, Walter Brennan, and Joanne Dru; and "Shane" (1953, George Stevens), with Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Brandon deWilde, Van Heflin, Jack Palance, Edgar Buchanan, Elisha Cook, Jr., Ben Johnson, and Emile Meyer.
July 13: "Pretty Poison" (†) and "Point Blank" (†).
July 14-15: "All About Eve" (†) and "Sunset Boulevard" (†).
July 16: "Band of Outsiders" (1964, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina, Sami Frey, and Charles Brasseur; and "Breathless" (1959, Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo.
July 17: "Odd Man Out" (†) and "The Outcast of the Islands" (†).
July 18: "Nicholas Nickelby" (1947, Alberto Cavalcanti), with Cedric Hardwicke, Derek Bond, and Bernard Miles; and "Great Expectations" (†).
July 19: "The Meeting at Midnight" (1944, Phil Rosen), with Sidney Toler as Charlie Chan; "Mr. Moto's Last Warning" (1939, Norman Foster), with Peter Lorre as Moto; and "Mr. Wong, Detective" (1938, William Nigh), with Boris Karloff as Wong.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—July 10 at 2:30: "A Child Is Waiting" (1963, directed by John Cassavetes), with Burt Lancaster, Judy Garland, and Gena Rowlands. . . . ¶ July 10 at 6: "Big Trouble" (1985, Cassavetes), with Peter Falk, Alan Arkin, and Beverly D'Angelo. . . . ¶ July 11 at 2:30: "Opening Night" (1978, Cassavetes), with Cassavetes, Rowlands, and Ben Gazzara. . . . ¶ July 11 at 6: "A Woman Under the Influence" (1974, Cassavetes), with Falk, Rowlands, and Katherine Cassavetes. . . . ¶ July 13 at 2:30: "Love Streams" (1984, Cassavetes), with Cassavetes, Rowlands, and Diahnne Abbott. . . . ¶ July 13 at 6: "Husbands" (1970, Cassavetes), with Cassavetes, Gazzara, and Falk. . . . ¶ July 14 at 2:30: "Une Femme Est une Femme" (1961, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina and Jean-Paul Belmondo. . . . ¶ July 14 at 6: "French Can Can" (1955, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin and Françoise Arnoul. . . . ¶ July 15 at 2: "Chasing the Chaser" (1925, Hal Roach; silent), with Stan Laurel; and "The Bells" (1926, James Young; silent), with Boris Karloff. . . . ¶ July 15 at 5: "Mephisto" (1981, István Szabó; in Hungarian), with Klaus Maria Brandauer. . . . ¶ July 16 at 2: "The Whales of August" (1987, Lindsay Anderson), with Lillian Gish and Bette Davis. . . . ¶ July 16 at 5 and July 17 at 2:30: "Play Misty for Me" (1971, Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Jessica Walter. . . . ¶ July 17 at 6: "Une Femme Est une Femme." . . . ¶ July 18 at 2:30: "The Dead" (1987, John Huston), with Angelica Huston and Donal McCann. . . . ¶ July 18 at 6: "Chasing the Chaser" and "The Bells."

American Museum of the Moving Image, 36th St. at 35th Ave., Astoria. (1-718 764-0077)—Avant-garde comedies. July 12 at 2:30: "Recreation" (1956), "Horse Over Tea Kettle" (1962), "Jamestown Baloos" (1957), and

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

"Bang" (1986), all by Robert Breer; and "Lineage" (1979, George Griffin). . . . July 13 at 2:30: "The Great Blondino" (1967) and "Bleu Shut" (1970), both by Robert Nelson. . . . July 14 at 2:30: "Blonde Cobra" (1963, Ken Jacobs) and "The End" (1953, Christopher MacLaine). . . . ¶ Films directed by Cecil B. De Mille. July 14 at 7:30: "Dynamite" (1929), with Kay Johnson and Charles Bickford. . . . July 15 at 1: "Madam Satan" (1930), with Johnson and Lillian Roth. . . . July 15 at 3: "The Squaw Man" (1931), with Warner Baxter and Lupe Velez. . . . July 15 at 5 and July 16 at 12:30: "The Sign of the Cross" (1932), with Fredric March, Elissa Landi, Claudette Colbert, and Charles Laughton. . . . July 16 at 3: "This Day and Age" (1933), with Bickford. . . . July 16 at 5: "Four Frightened People" (1934), with Colbert and Herbert Marshall. . . . July 19 at 2:30: "Dynamite."

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty years. Through July 15: Sumner Locke Elliot's "Wish on the Moon" (1953, NBC), with Eva Marie Saint; and F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Rich Boy" (1952, NBC), with Grace Kelly. . . . From July 18: Rod Serling's "Patterns" (1955, NBC), with Everett Sloane, Richard Kiley, and Ed Begley; and David Davidson's "President" (1956, NBC), with Claude Rains, Larry Gates, Fred Clark, and Everett Sloane. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ Comedies seen on cable. Through July 15: "David Letterman: Looking for Fun" (1982) and "Your New American Actress Friend, Sandra Bernhard" (1986). . . . From July 18: "Harry Shearer—It's Just TV" (1986) and "The Richard Belzer Show" (1984). Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ Commemoration of Richard Rodgers. Through July 15: "Rodgers and Hart Today" (1967, ABC), with Bobby Darin, the Supremes, the Mamas and the Papas, and others. . . . From July 18: "America Salutes Richard Rodgers—The Sound of His Music" (1978, CBS), with Diahann Carroll, Vic Damone, Sammy Davis, Jr., and others. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 6:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30. . . . ¶ Shows produced and directed by Gary Smith and Dwight Hemion. Through July 15: "Jonathan Winters: A Wild Winters Night" (1964, NBC) and "Alan King's Wonderful World of Aggravation" (1972, ABC). . . . From July 18: "Goldie and Kids . . . Listen to Us" (1982, ABC), with Goldie Hawn and Barry Manilow; and "Julie on Sesame Street" (1973, ABC), with Julie Andrews, Perry Como, and the Muppets. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 1.

92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. (996-1100)—July 13 at 8: "The Thin Blue Line" (1987, Errol Morris). Following the screening, Dr. Sybil Del Gaudio and Randall Adams, the subject of the documentary, will talk about the film.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—July 13 at 8: "The Ten Commandments" (1923, Cecil B. De Mille; silent), with Theodore Roberts, Richard Dix, and Rod la Rocque. Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

All About Eve (1950)—Ersatz art of a very high grade, and one of the most enjoyable movies ever made. A young aspiring actress, Eve Harrington (Anne Baxter), intrigues to take the place of an aging star, Margo Channing (Bette Davis), onstage and in bed, and the battle is fought with tooth, claw, and a battery of epigrams. The synthetic has qualities of its own—glib, overexplicit, self-important, the "You're sneaky and corrupt but so am I—we belong to each other darling" style of writing. The scriptwriter-director Joseph L. Mankiewicz's bad taste, exhibited with verve, is more fun than careful, mousy, dehydrated good taste. His nonsense about "theatre" is saved by one performance that is the real thing: Bette Davis is at her most instinctive and assured. Her actress—vain, scared, a woman who goes too far in her reactions and emotions—makes the whole thing come alive (though it's hard to believe Anne Baxter could ever be a threat to Bette Davis). With George Sanders (as the critic Addison De Witt), Celeste Holm, Gary Merrill, Thelma Ritter, and Marilyn Monroe, who has one of her best early roles. Based on a short story and radio play by Mary Orr.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 14-15.)

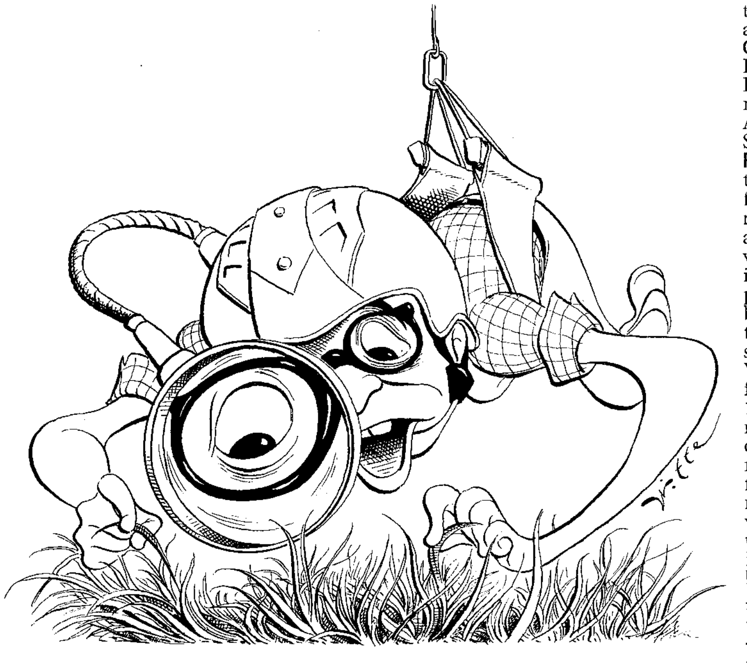
Batman—Tim Burton's powerfully glamorous comic-book epic, with sets angled and lighted like film noir, goes beyond pulp. It has a funky, nihilistic charge, and an eerie, poetic intensity that might be described as pop Wagnerian. Michael Keaton is the fabulously wealthy Bruce Wayne, who patrols the sinister, nighttime canyons of Gotham City in the guise of Batman, and Jack Nicholson is the sniggering mobster Jack Napier, who *turns into the leering* madman the Joker. The two are fighting for the soul of the city that spawned them. The movie is underwritten, but it has so many unpredictable spins that what's missing doesn't seem to matter much. It's mean and anarchic and blissful. Written by Sam Hamm, Warren Skaaren (and uncredited others), based on characters created by Bob Kane. With cinematography by Roger Pratt; design by Anton Furst; costumes by Bob Ringwood; a plangent score by Danny Elfman, and songs by Prince. The cast includes Jack Palance, Kim Basinger, Jerry Hall, and Robert Wuhl.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/10/89.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Chocolat—Whatever Claire Denis's first feature is supposed to be about, it proves, at least, that the English don't have a monopoly on swanky colonial torpor. The movie is constructed as an extended flashback: a young Frenchwoman (named France) travelling in Africa remembers her fifties girlhood in a remote outpost of Cameroon, where her father was a district officer. Most of this story consists of smoldering looks exchanged by the girl's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the family's handsome African "boy," Protée (Isaach de Bankolé). When Maman feels herself becoming too hot and bothered at the sight of the noble black man, she brusquely orders him to fetch something; Protée deals with his frustration by taking a lot of showers. Nothing actually happens. In denying him any kind of release for his pent-up desire, Denis encourages us to think she's making a political point. What she's really doing is dehumanizing him—treating him as a gleaming hunk whose anger and wounded reserve just make him more exotically alluring. "Chocolat" looks pretty good, but it's merde in a fancy wrapper. In French.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Dangerous Liaisons—One of the least static costume films ever made, and what costumes! The women—Glenn Close, Michelle Pfeiffer, Uma Thurman, Swoosie Kurtz, Mildred Natwick—look as if they'd been dressed by Gainsborough. (Actually, it was James Acheson, who also dressed "The Last Emperor.") Principally about the erotic power games played by the Marquise de Merteuil (Glenn Close) and the Vicomte de Valmont (John Malkovich), who were once lovers but are now allies and co-conspirators, this first-rate piece of work by the daring and agile director Stephen Frears is alive in a way that movies of classics rarely are. The paradisially beautiful Pfeiffer is wonderfully affecting as the pawn of the debauchers' final game. The screenwriter, Christopher Hampton, reworked his 1985 theatrical version of the 1782 novel by Choderlos de Laclos; cinematography by Philippe Rousselot.—P.K. (1/9/89) (Festival; through July 13.)

Dead Poets Society—Robin Williams gives an astonishingly empathic performance as an eager, dedicated prep-school teacher in the late fifties. This teacher talks to his boys about the passions expressed in poetry and helps them release their creative impulses. But one of the boys, soaring on his new confidence, lacks the shrewdness and courage to deal with his rigid, uncomprehending father, and makes a disastrous choice. Directed by Peter Weir, from a script by Thomas Schulman, the picture draws out the obvious and turns itself into a classic. Weir, it appears, is more interested in the elegiac than in the dramatic. Like his "Gallipoli," this film has a gold ribbon attached to it. With Robert Sean Leonard, Ethan Hawke, Josh Charles, Gale Hansen, and Kurtwood Smith and Norman Lloyd.—P.K. (6/26/89) (Gramercy, Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Field of Dreams—Doggerel emotion. Kevin Costner, a New Age farmer in Iowa, longs to be reconciled with his dead father, a minor-league baseball player whose outlook he had rejected in the sixties. He hears a whispered command to build a baseball field, and when he does the spirits of Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta) and the other White Sox who were barred from baseball for life after the 1919 World Series scandal arrive and play regularly. This is only the beginning of the hero's mystical encounters. That the film is sincere doesn't mean it's not manipulative; when the weepers in the audience start up, you may feel like a pariah if you're not moved. Adapted by the writer-director Phil Alden Robinson from W. P. Kinsella's 1982 novel "Shoeless Joe." With Amy Madigan, James Earl Jones, and Burt Lancaster.—P.K. (5/1/89)



Rick Moranis in "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids"

(Eastside Cinema, Bleecker Street Cinema, Cinema 3, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex; starting July 14.)

Ghostbusters II—Surprisingly, it's more enjoyable than the first "Ghostbusters." It's a big comedy, but it's light on its feet, and the throwaway jokes are weightless—they *ping!* and dissolve in the air. You can't remember what you're laughing at, but you feel great. The script, by Harold Ramis and Dan Aykroyd, is a floating crap game, like the scripts for the Hope and Crosby "Road" pictures. Bill Murray holds it together, and assorted comedians—Sigourney Weaver, Rick Moranis, Annie Potts, Ernie Hudson, Peter MacNicol, Cheech Marin, Harris Yulin, Ramis & Aykroyd—come in and out of the scenes, dropping one-liners. The comic premise is that the collective angry energy of Manhattanites is feeding an underground river of boiling slime, which is swelling; our bad vibes are literally destroying the city. Directed by Ivan Reitman; cinematography by Michael Chapman.—P.K. (7/10/89) (34th St. East, Baronet, Coronet, U.A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Worldwide Cinemas, Regency, Olympia, and National Twin.)

Great Expectations (1946)—David Lean directed this handsome British production; it takes us back to that period in English letters when heroes had nice manners, a story had sweep and flourish, and all the stray subplots were gathered up and "rhymed." The rather creamy look is not particularly appropriate to Dickens, but the film has a strong style that is very different from Lean's earlier work. He seems finally to have let go—to have pulled out all the stops. The film is emotional, exciting, full of action. This hyperbolic style rushes us past the awkward bits of staging and the slight dissatisfaction we may feel about the boy Pip (Anthony Wager) turning into John Mills, who plays his role very tentatively—almost as if he were trying out for it. Jean Simmons is the young girl, Estella, and then Valerie Hobson takes over the part, though it's inconceivable that one could grow into the other, and despite Hobson's dignity and beauty something seems to be lost. The rest of the cast, though, is close to miraculous: Alec Guinness is Herbert Pocket; Finlay Currie is Magwitch; Martita Hunt is Miss Havisham; and Francis L. Sullivan (who had the same role in the 1934 Hollywood version) is the most alarming upholder of the law as Jaggers. The producer, Ronald Neame, collaborated with Lean on the adaptation.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 18.)

Heathers—Westerburg High's three rich beauties who make life hell for those less gilded are all named Heather. Their reluctant associate, Veronica (Winona Ryder), confides in her diary that she dreams of "a world without Heather," and a psychotically fearless juvenile delinquent, J.D. (Christian Slater), materializes, and goads her to become his accomplice in making her dream come true. The script, by Daniel Waters, has a lot of prankish, spiky dialogue and some good rowdy slapstick nastiness, such as Veronica and J.D.'s killing two football heroes and arranging their deaths to suggest that they were lovers in a suicide pact; the script promises that the picture will lift off into the junior division of Blue Velvetland. But layers of didacticism weigh it down, and the young, inexperienced director, Michael Lehmann (who uses hyper-bright colors for a facetious artificial effect), doesn't find the right moods for the gags. Where's the sting?—P.K. (4/17/89) (Plaza; through July 11.)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—This mediocre third film in the Indiana Jones trilogy—a reprise of the first, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"—is a mixture of cliffhanger and anti-Nazi thriller and religious spectacle. It's enjoyable, but familiar, and the action lacks the exhilarating, leaping precision that the director, Steven Spielberg, is famous for. The only real spin is in the slapstick teamwork of Harrison Ford, as the archeologist-adventurer Indy, and Sean Connery, as Indy's father, a medievalist who's too engrossed in his studies to pay much attention to his daredevil son's triumphs. With River Phoenix playing Indy as a boy, Alison Doody, Denholm Elliott, John Rhys-Davies, and Julian Glover. The screenplay, by Jeffrey Boam, is based on a story devised by the producer George Lucas and Menno Meyjes.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Loews Astor Plaza; July 10. . . . ¶ Loews Orpheum; through July 13. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting July 11.)

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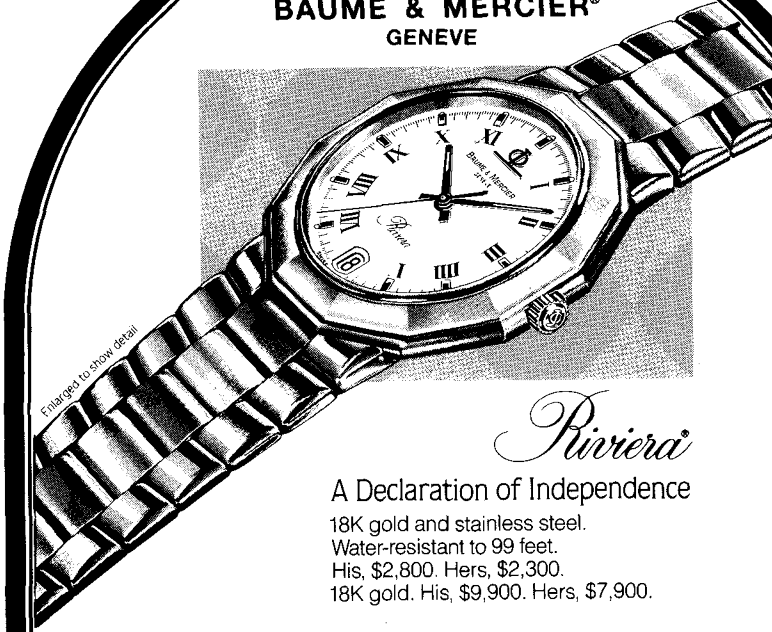

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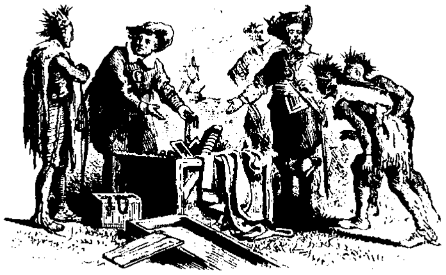

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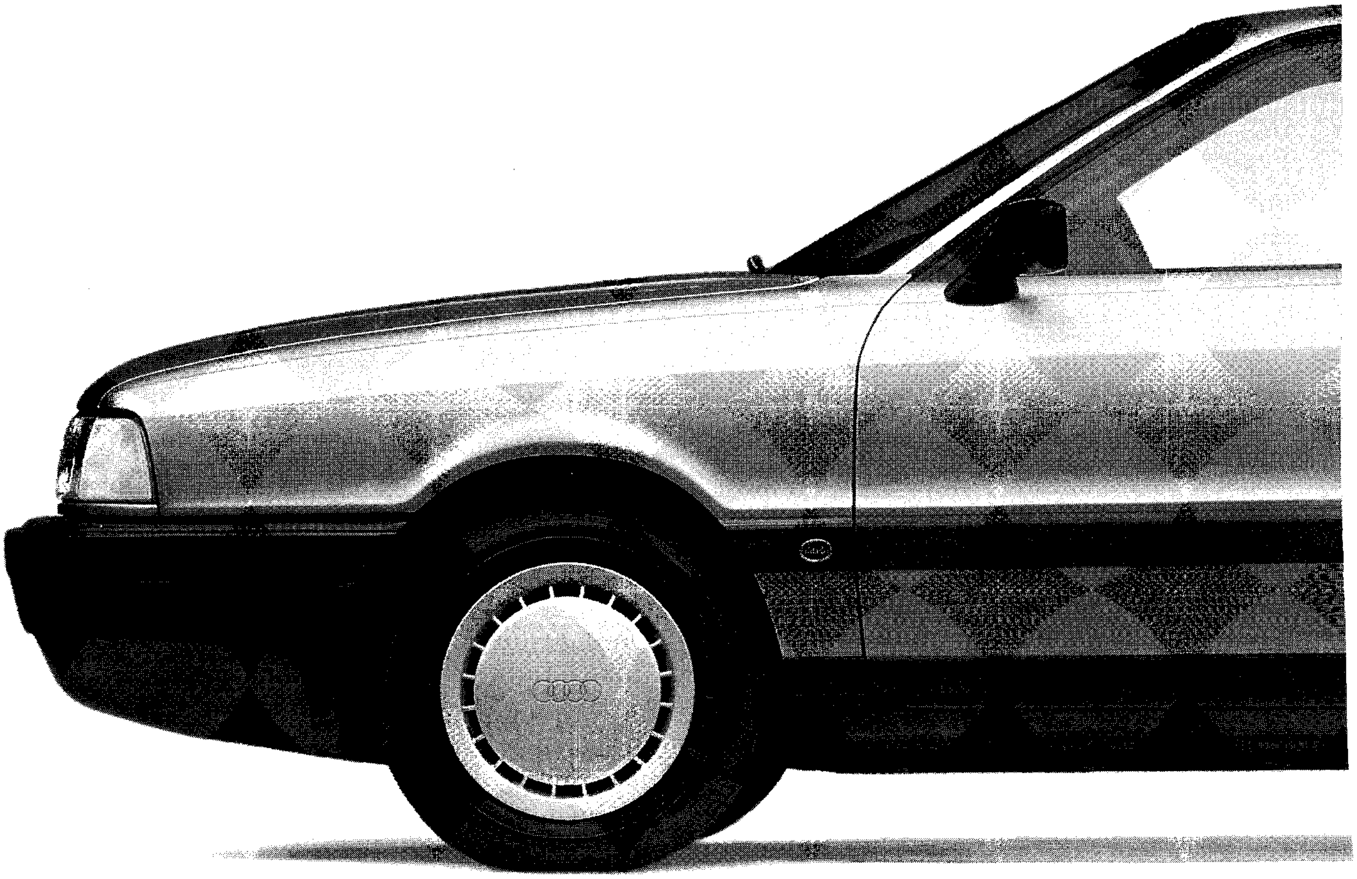

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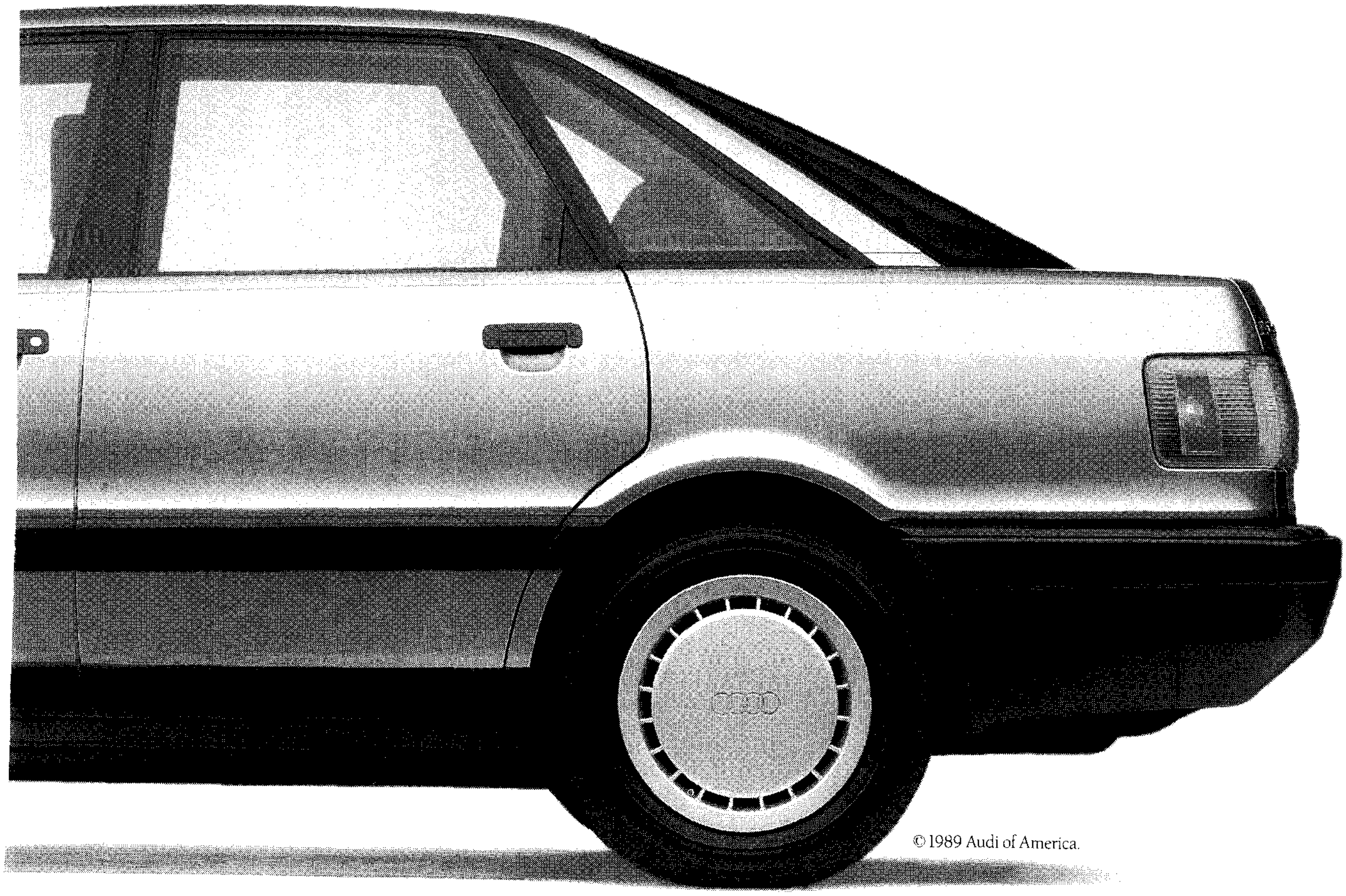

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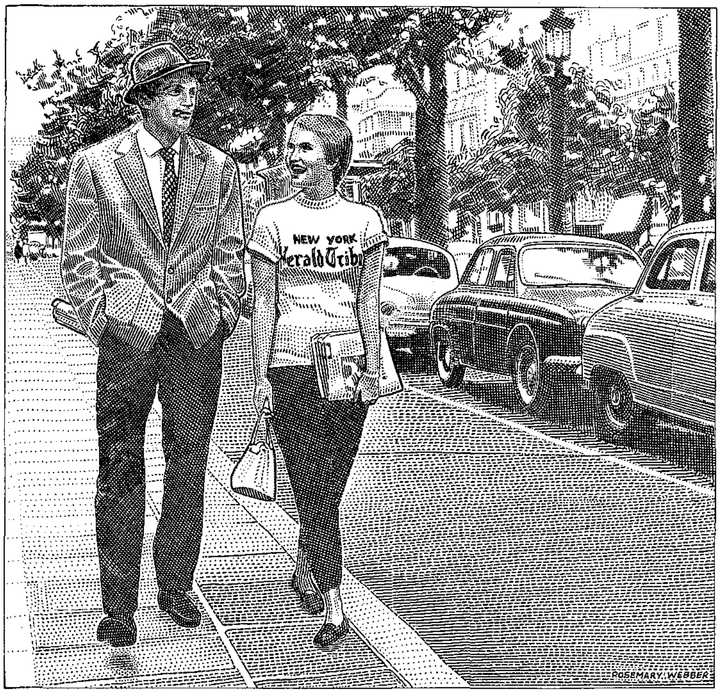


Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg in "Breathless"

If the Beatles overhauled popular music, then Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut were the Lennon and McCartney of movies, exploding old boundaries, tearing American forms loose from Hollywood convention, and rooting them anew in a raucously tender sensibility. Truffaut, like McCartney, was openly emotional and lyrical. Godard was the Lennon/Lenin figure—satiric and intellectual—but, when he and Truffaut were simpatico, Godard also dared to be romantically vulnerable.

You can see Godard at his most Truffaut-like in a Theatre 80 St. Marks double bill on July 16th. Thirty years haven't subdued the grimy lustre of "Breathless," the existential anti-thriller starring Jean-Paul Belmondo, as a small-time, cop-killing crook, and Jean Seberg, as the American lover who betrays him. Truffaut provided the movie with a detailed outline. But Godard, in Truffaut's words, "accumulates bits of truth and binds them together to make a kind of modern fairy tale."

The best early Godard may be his beautiful and poetic 1964 melodrama "Band of Outsiders." This elegy for the fleeting romance of youth—starring Anna Karina, Sami Frey, and Claude Brasseur as amorous friends and dreamers who together botch a heist—is filled with quixotic splendors. The men play at being Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid. In an English class, Karina and Brasseur flirt while the teacher reads "Romeo and Juliet"—their love, too, will be "death-marked." Years after Godard and Truffaut broke off their friendship, the latter wrote, the movie "gives us the impression that the highest degree of authenticity in acting has now been reached."

Lawrence of Arabia (1962)—If you went to see it under the delusion that it was going to be about T. E. Lawrence, you probably stayed to enjoy the vastness of the desert and the pleasures of the senses that a huge movie epic can provide. Directed by David Lean, from a script by Robert Bolt, loosely based on Lawrence's "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," this picture fails to give an acceptable interpretation of Lawrence, or to keep its action intelligible, but it is one of the most literate and tasteful and exciting of expensive spectacles. The central figure is played quite stunningly by Peter O'Toole, though he seems to be doing "Lord Jim"—which he was cast in a couple of years later (and then it looked as if he were doing Lawrence all over again). Bolt and Lean turn the hero into such a flamboyant poetic enigma that he is displaced in the film by a simpler hero—Omar Sharif's Ali, a handsome sheikh with liquid brown eyes and conventionally sympathetic lines to speak. As it became apparent that most people in the audience hadn't the remotest idea of what the Arabs and the Turks were doing in the First World War, or which was which, or why the English cared, the question raised by the movie was, Can complicated historical events and a complex hero really get across in a spectacle? With Alec Guinness, José Ferrer, Anthony Quinn, Arthur Kennedy, Jack Hawkins, Claude Rains, Anthony Quayle, and Donald Wolfit. Cinematography by Freddie Young; music by Maurice Jarre. (The film, substantially cut after its first release, has been restored to a more or less definitive version, running 217 minutes.)—P.K. (Gemini, and Warner.)

Les Liaisons Dangereuses (1959)—Valmont and Juliette, the eighteenth-century characters in the Laclos novel, are former lovers who, writing to each other about their strategies, targets, and fresh conquests, turn love into something as studied and calculated as war. They take the love out of love. Modernizing the story, the director Roger Vadim ties things up rather neatly by having Valmont (in a tired, too-sweet performance by Gérard Philipe—his last) and Juliette (Jeanne Moreau at her ravaged best) married. In Laclos the pleasure seems to be in carrying out the plan, achieving the victory—a triumph of austere, rational conquest; in Vadim's version a sensuous aura surrounds and permeates the objects. The first scene of Marianne (Annette Stroyberg) in the snow, her mouth open in laughter for a romantic eternity, isn't on a much higher level than the *Playboy* bunnies of the month; Vadim uses sex and jazz all mixed together in a cheap and sensational way that was probably exotic for the French in the fifties. But, using these elements, he attempts to give them a rhythm and feeling that are, at least, unusually high-class commercialism. With Jeanne Valerie, Jean-Louis Trintignant, and Simone Renant. Background music by Thelonious Monk; party music by the Jazz Messengers, with Kenny Clarke. In French.—P.K. (Public Theatre; starting July 14.)

Love in the Afternoon (1957)—Wide-eyed Audrey Hepburn as the Parisian schoolgirl whom Elisabeth Bergner played in "Ariane." A student of the cello, this Ariane falls in love with an aging American roué ensconced in the Paris Ritz—Gary Cooper, looking as if he knows how unappealing he is in the role. The director, Billy Wilder, and his co-scenarist, I. A. L. Diamond, have made her the daughter of a detective (Maurice Chevalier), who is then hired by Cooper to investigate her. It's all meant to be airy and bubbly, but it's obvious, overextended (two hours plus), and overproduced.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; July 16-17.)

My Beautiful Laundrette (1986)—A startlingly fresh movie about life in South London among the surly white street gangs who live on the dole and feel that they're in a dead-end society and the Pakistani immigrants who know that this society is the best they can hope for, and try to move upward by wriggling through the cracks. In the foreground is a love affair between a dark-eyed, softly handsome, almost flowerlike Pakistani teen-ager, Omar (Gordon Warnecke), who grew up in this neighborhood, and a young blond street lout, Johnny (Daniel Day Lewis). They become partners when Omar persuades his slumlord uncle (Saeed Jaffrey) to let him have a ratty-looking failed laundrette, and the two boys, using stolen money, turn it into the laundrette of their flashy dreams. Directed by Stephen Frears, from a witty script by the young playwright Hanif Kureishi, who was born in South London to a Pakistani father and a white English mother, the film catches you up in the racketeering and decay of modern big-city life; you feel that your blinders have been taken off. It's an enormous pleasure to see a movie that's really about something, and that doesn't lay on any syrupy coating to make the subject go down easily. (It's down before you notice it.)—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; July 14-15.)

Odd Man Out (1946)—Wounded at noon, the Irish rebel Johnny MacQueen (James Mason) stumbles through the streets of Belfast until midnight—the object of an intense widespread manhunt. The tormented, delirious man, bleeding to death, seeks (but does not find) refuge on his way to the grave. Despite the reservations we may feel about his final denunciation of a world without charity, it's a memorable scene. Though the director, Carol Reed, doesn't quite succeed in creating a masterpiece (the inflated ideas in the script don't allow him to), there are bravura visual passages, the sound is often startlingly effective, and the film provides an experience that can't be shrugged off. Mason isn't only a resourceful actor; he's also a superb camera subject, and Reed and the cinematographer, Robert Krasker, draw us so close to his Johnny MacQueen that we want to save him to save ourselves. With Kathleen Ryan, W. G. Fay, Maureen Delany. Denis O'Dea, F. J. McCormick, William Hartnell, Dan O'Herlihy, Fay Compton, Cyril Cusack, and, regrettably, Robert Newton, in a badly misconceived role—the drunken mad painter Lukey. F. L. Green's novel was adapted by Green and R. C. Sherriff.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 17.)

An Outcast of the Islands (1951)—A marvellous film (drawn from Joseph Conrad's work) that relatively few people have seen. It's probably the only movie that has ever attempted to deal in a complex way with the subject of the civilized man's ambivalence about the savage. It also contains some of the most remarkable sequences ever filmed by the English director Carol Reed; it's an uneven movie, but with splendid moments throughout. Trevor Howard is superb as Willems, who makes himself an outcast first through contemptible irresponsibility and through betrayal of those who trust him, and finally and hopelessly when, against his will, he is attracted to a silent, primitive girl, the terrifying Aissa (played by Kerima). Willems is wrong in almost everything he does, but he represents a gesture toward life; his enemy, Almayer (Robert Morley), is so horribly, pathetically stuffy that his family unit (with Wendy Hiller as his wife and Annabel Morley as his child) is absurdly, painfully funny. With Ralph Richardson, whose role is possibly ill-conceived. The screenplay is by William Fairchild.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 17.)

Point Blank (1967)—A showoffy, brutal, somewhat inexplicable account of a crook (Lee Marvin) who seeks justice on his own murderous terms. But it's director John Boorman's virtuosity that is the star. Intermittently dazzling, the film has more energy and invention than Boorman seems to know what to do with. He appears to take the title literally; one comes out exhilarated but bewildered. With Angie Dickinson (she has her best scene slapping Marvin repeatedly—to no effect), Carroll O'Connor, Keenan Wynn, Michael Strong, and John Vernon. The West

Coast settings include the actual (though no longer in use) prison on Alcatraz.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 13.)

Pretty Poison (1968)—An unobtrusive little psychological thriller, subtle and very smart. Anthony Perkins gives what may be his most sensitively conceived performance; he's a character who develops from a quirky, sneaky, funny boy into a decent, sympathetic man. He toys with fantasies but knows they're fantasies. Tuesday Weld plays a small-town girl, crazy for excitement, who accepts his fantasies in a matter-of-fact way and proceeds to act on them. Lorenzo Semple, Jr., wrote a beauty of a script (based on Stephen Geller's novel "She Let Him Continue"); the horror in the movie isn't just in the revelation of what the pretty young girl is capable of—it's in your awareness that the man's future is being destroyed. Directed by Noel Black. With John Randolph and Beverly Garland. Shot on location in western Massachusetts; the river that is carrying poisonous red dye is the once "mighty" Housatonic.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 13.)

Scandal—Tepid. The director, Michael Caton-Jones, and the writer, Michael Thomas, who dig up the Profumo affair, might have used it as the basis for a satirical slice of history; instead, they've made a sentimental docudrama—one more English film about the cruelty of the class system. What sustains a viewer is the narrative, with its evocative details of life in London from 1959 to 1963—how the teen-age showgirl Christine Keeler (Joanne Whalley-Kilmer), bored with the middle-aged dignitaries that the society osteopath Stephen Ward (John Hurt) introduced her to, took on a West Indian lover and then another West Indian, and how, as a result of a violent quarrel between the two, a newspaperman got on her trail. She then offered up the story of her earlier gentlemen callers, the Tory Secretary of State for War, John Profumo (Ian McKellen), and the assistant naval attaché of the Soviet Embassy (Jeroen Krabbé). And bang! The tabloids whipped up indignation over the decadence of the "Establishment"—over sadomasochism and spies and naked bathing in Lord Astor's pool. Whalley-Kilmer's opaque, unreadable Christine comes to life a bit in her scenes with her showgirl pal, Mandy Rice-Davies, played by Bridget Fonda, who brings a gamine crispness to the role. She's the movie's only wild card. With Daniel Massey, Roland Gift, Britt Ekland, Leslie Phillips, and Trevor Eve.—P.K. (5/15/89) (57th St. Playhouse; through July 13. . . . ¶ Festival; starting July 14.)

Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills—The script, by Bruce Wagner, from a satirical sex-farce plot he devised with the director, Paul Bartel, calls for something like the goosey stylized acting that Charles Ludlam perfected at the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, but Bartel has directed with his usual home-movies sluggishness. Two houseboys, a cynic (Ray Sharkey) and a romantic (Robert Beltran), who work in adjacent mansions, bet on which one will be the first to make out with the other's employer—one a divorcée (Mary Woronov), the other a widow (Jacqueline Bisset). The households include various siblings, offspring, and hangers-on (Arnetia Walker, Ed Begley, Jr., Wallace Shawn, Paul Mazursky, Rebecca Schaeffer, Edith Diaz, and others)—all of them libidinous or gaga. Arnetia Walker manages to bring in some zesty horseplay, and Bisset's amused calm is occasionally pleasant, but mostly this is just mistimed, failed camp, and some of the lines that are meant to be screamingly dirty-funny come out screamingly sour. (The sound recording is poor.)—P.K. (68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

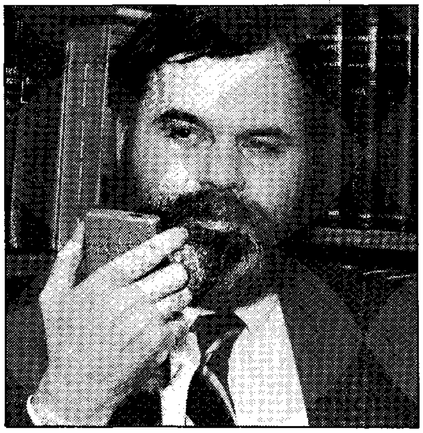
Sunset Boulevard (1950)—A young scriptwriter (William Holden), speeding away from the finance-company men who have come to repossess his car (it is Los Angeles, where a man can get along without his honor, but not without his car), turns into a driveway on Sunset Boulevard and finds himself at the decaying mansion of the once great silent star Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson). Attended by her butler (Erich von Stroheim), who was once her husband and her director, she lives among the mementos of her past, and plots her comeback in her own adaptation of "Salome." The rapacious old vamp persuades the young man to stay and work with her on the script; he becomes her kept man, her lover, her victim. Glint-eyed Swanson clutches at her comeback role almost as if it were Salome, yet the acting honors belong to Holden. When he makes love to the crazy, demanding old woman, his face shows a mixture of pity and guilt and nausea. This brittle satiric tribute to Hollywood's leopard-skin past—it's narrated by a corpse—is almost too clever, yet it's at its best in this cleverness, and is slightly banal in the sequences dealing with a normal girl (Nancy Olson) and modern Hollywood. Billy Wilder directed; Charles Brackett produced; the script is by Brackett, Wilder, and D. M. Marshman, Jr. With Buster Keaton, Hedda Hopper, Cecil B. De Mille, and Jack Webb.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 14-15.)

Trouble in Mind (1986)—Written and directed by the gifted highflier Alan Rudolph at his most art-conscious, this is a reworking of what he did much better in "Choose Me." The mixed-up lovers have been replaced by mixed-up gangsters, and what was comic and lyrical is now fatalistic. He's got the film-noir bug, and the picture is a pile of poetic mush set in some doom-laden, vaguely universal city of the past and/or the future. Rudolph probably aimed to create a glamorous, funky trance world, but his control fails him; the scenes often start with a shimmer that makes you feel hopeful, but they become stagnant, and you have no way of knowing how to interpret the flossy hipster-philosopher babble that the characters speak. With Kris Kristofferson, Joe Morton, Keith Carradine, Divine, Geneviève Bujold, Lori Singer, and John Considine.—P.K. (Cinema Village; starting July 19.)

Vampire's Kiss—Nicolas Cage is airily amazing here. As a Manhattan literary agent—a poseur with a high-flown accent and a pouty, snobbish stare—he does some of the way-out stuff that you love actors in silent movies for doing. Something between a horror picture and a black comedy, this may be the first vampire movie in which the modern office building replaces the castle as the site of torture and degradation. Despite some narrative confusion, the movie has an effective scary wackiness. With Maria Conchita Alonso, Jennifer Beals, Kasi Lemmons, and Elizabeth Ashley. Directed by Robert Bierman, with a script by Joseph Minion.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Loews New York Twin; through July 13.)

Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh (1987)—Paul Cox's documentary biography of the great painter is earnest, honorable, and uninspired. Cox has the good idea to tell the story in the artist's own words: the voice-over narration consists entirely of excerpts from letters written by van Gogh to his brother Theo. (They are read, with tremendous solemnity and perhaps an excess of actorly skill, by John Hurt.) But Cox's use of the letters is crude: van Gogh's raw, anguished meditations on life and art are presented without irony, as if he really were a profound thinker. The words actually dominate the images; at times, the beautiful paintings function only as illustrations of the deep thoughts. Cox also includes endless footage of Dutch and French countryside, as well as a handful of staged tableaux—peasants eating potatoes, a scene in a cabaret, the painter's funeral. It's all much too pretty—"painterly" in a horribly naïve way. He seems to be trying to compete with van Gogh as a maker of images; he loses. Cox's excesses mirror van Gogh's, but his art doesn't: in this film, the light always seems to be coming from the wrong direction.—T.R. (Bleecker Street Cinema.)

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown—The most original pop writer-director of the eighties, Pedro Almodóvar is Godard with a human face—a happy face. The artificial is what sends him sky high, and the Madrid of this film is (as the closing song has it) "Puro Teatro." This is a movie where after a while you can't tell sexy from funny. Pepa (Carmen Maura), an actress who works in TV and commercials, turns on her answering machine and learns that she has been jilted. Infuriated, she dashes around, on spike heels, in a short, tight skirt, trying to confront her long-time live-in lover, the elegant, vain Iván (Fernando Guillén). The women of the title include Iván's early lover (Julieta Serrano), his new lover (Kiti Manver), and two (Rossy De Palma and María Barranco) who are involved with his son (Antonio Banderas). Sleek-legged and chic, they run the theatrical gamut. Cinematography by José Luis Alcaine. In Spanish.—P.K. (11/14/88) (Cinema Studio.)



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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

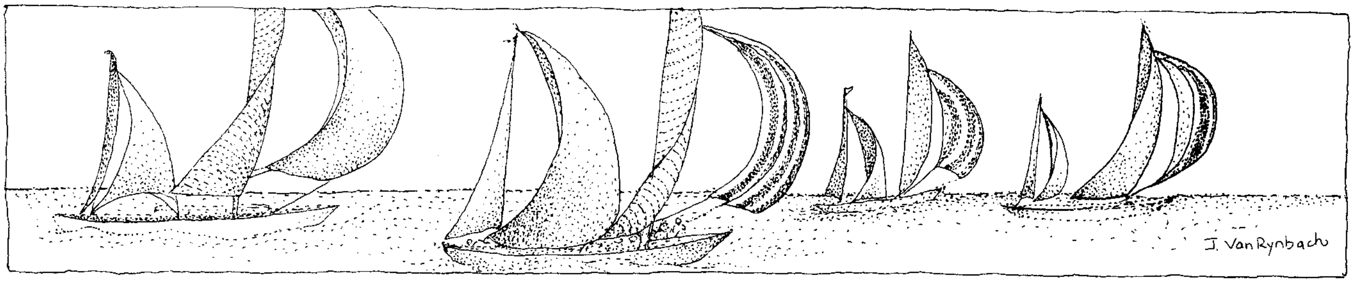
Notes and Comment

"THE ABANDONED FIELD" ("Canh Tong Hoang"), a Vietnamese film made in 1979, begins with an odd serenade. A young man perched in the upper branches of a tree in a flooded forest sings to a young woman paddling a sampan. She replies with verses that mock him and question his worthiness to love her. Both sing in a style reminiscent, to our ear, of Chinese street opera. "The Abandoned Field," which was shown not long ago at the Asia Society, was the first Vietnamese film we had seen—in fact, it's one of the first postwar Vietnamese films to be shown in this country—and the thought that it might consist *entirely* of this sort of stylized, smiling, seemingly tuneless musical exchange did occur to us. But the young couple turn out to be capable of ordinary speech, and the echoes of Asian musical theatre soon give way to stronger echoes. Of French New Wave cinema, for instance. Shot in a vintage-looking black-and-white, "The Abandoned Field" has some of the edgy, tender, cigarette-worshipping quality of early Godard or Chabrol. But its story takes place during the height of the American military involvement in Vietnam, and its point of view is thoroughly—for an American audience, stunningly—Vietnamese.

The young couple of the opening frames live, with their infant son, in a bamboo tree house in a Mekong Delta marsh that has been designated a free-fire zone by the Americans. All the other inhabitants of the area have fled—thus the abandoned field of the title. The couple collaborate with the local guerrillas, and at one point assist a column of North Vietnamese soldiers passing through the delta, but most of their time is taken up by ordinary peasant work: fishing, farming, cooking, killing snakes. In the evenings, the young man strums a guitar, rolls and smokes cigarettes, and wonders if he needs to raise the floor of the house to keep it above the rising marsh. This idyll is marred only by the baby's atrocious acting. Scenes of domestic contentment are consistently undercut by the baby's unscripted bawling. As the actors playing the parents dandle the baby and coo, the baby cranes toward the camera, looking miserable, and reaches tearfully for the cameraman. Even the Asia Society audience howled with laughter.

But then the helicopters attack. The Americans have spotted the tree house and resolved to destroy it. The couple flee, pushing the baby through the reeds in a bucket, diving underwater as rockets and machine-gun fire explode around them. The attack seems to go on for hours, and the family sampan is blown to pieces. The couple refuse to abandon their home, however, and the Americans attack again. And yet again. The screaming baby, the terrified parents, the roar of the helicopters, which wheel and hover just a few feet overhead, raining bullets, make the tension of these scenes all but unbearable. It's like a nightmare edged with a kind of hyperrealism. When the parents seal the baby in a plastic bag and push him underwater, then desperately pull up and open the bag after each burst of gunfire, it looks like a survival technique developed under real fire.

The delicate tale of the young family living in the deserted marsh is shattered and cast aside by the attacks. The film is, in a sense, blown to bits. What replaces the domestic tableau, however, is not propaganda. "The Abandoned Field" was made four years after the end of the war and was intended for Vietnamese audiences, who hardly needed to be persuaded that the guerrilla cause was just. The film acquires a quality, rather, of exorcism. The helicopters, hated though they are, take over the picture; they become its stars. Their skids, their tail rotors, their blunt glass noses—these are real Hueys, presumably from the fleet left behind in 1975—become the subjects of long, close, trembling study. The camera seems mesmerized by the patterns of the rice grass whipping in the rotor wash, by the marsh water beaten into fierce little waves. American helicopter pilots in Vietnam used to call them-



selves "chicken hawks"; this is the perspective of the field mice. These scenes are like the reënactment of a collective trauma.

The Americans in the film, who are played by young Amerasians with scraggly beards, are villains out of melodrama—all shifty eyes, sneers, and murderous smiles. They're spectacularly wrong. "They look like *Sandinistas*," a companion of ours remarked. Back at their base, when they want to celebrate the birthday of the son of one of the pilots, they drink whiskey out of champagne glasses. Watching these unrecognizable, mishmash "Americans," we couldn't help wondering how the "Vietnamese" in American movies about the Vietnam War must look to real Vietnamese.

"The Abandoned Field" ends with its young hero killed by a hail of fire from a helicopter. His widow picks up his rifle and shoots the helicopter down. While the baby, left alone in a bunker, screams, the helicopter burns in a paddy field. We couldn't tell whether the filmmakers had really destroyed one of their Hueys in order to get the shot, but somehow it seemed not unlikely that they had.

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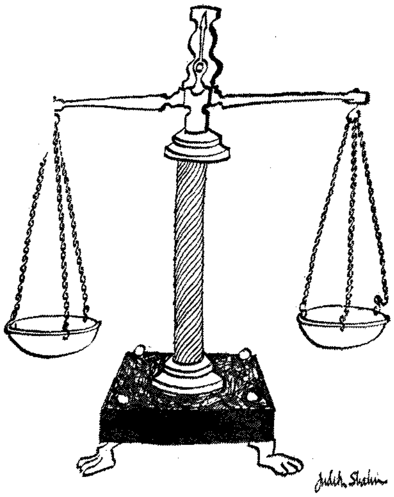
Penny Serenade

NEW YORK, a city of public art, has for several decades been a city of neglected, corroded, and extensively vandalized public art. In 1987, the Municipal Art Society of New York, a private group in Manhattan, initiated an Adopt-A-Monument program, in coöperation with both the city's Department of Parks and Recreation and its Art Commission. Under this program, a corporation, a foundation, a private group, or an individual agrees to pay the cost of restoring a particular work that the Society has taken under its wing.

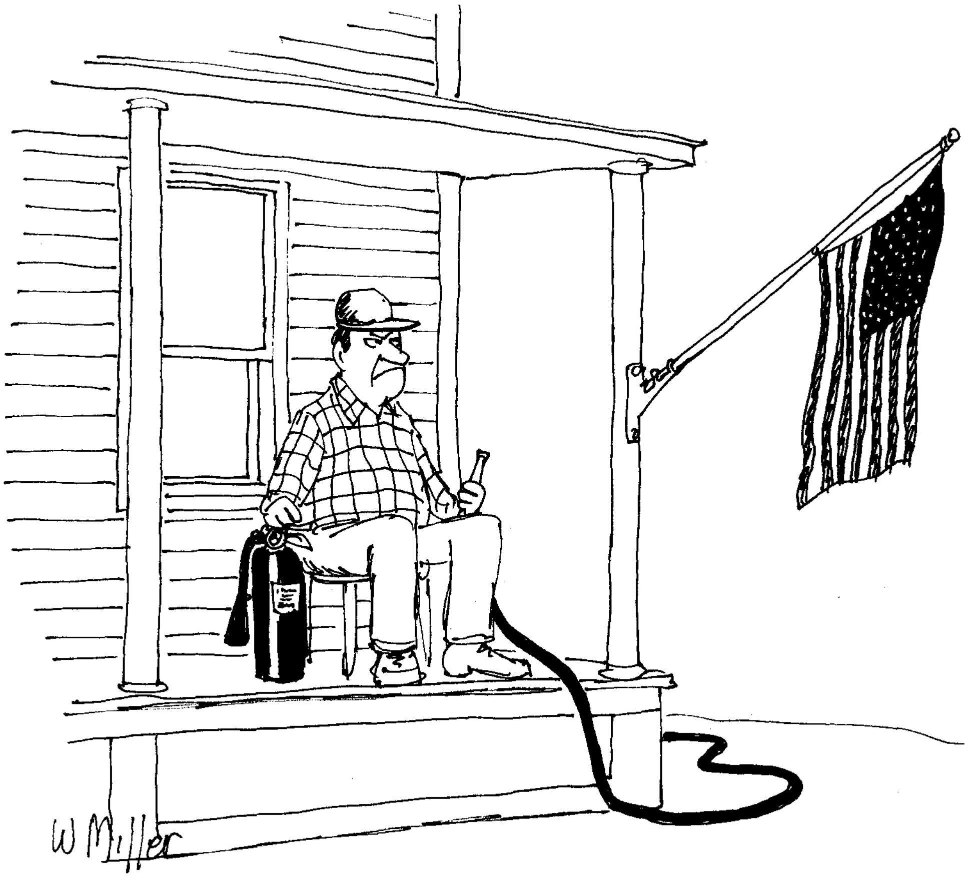
A Society brochure documents the various man-made indignities and assaults of nature that twenty such works among the five boroughs have suffered, beginning with the Heinrich Heine Fountain, in Joyce Kilmer Park, in the Bronx. A photograph of the statue from about 1905 shows a delicate Pre-Raphaelite female figure on a pedestal, with two mermaids beneath, and a portrait of the poet in profile. Between the mermaids, water trickles from the mouth of a dolphin into a scalloped shell. A 1986 photograph shows the ravages. Graffiti covers everything; Heine's face is obscured by it. The mermaids have been decapitated and their arms torn off. The nose and toes of the Lorelei have been gnawed away by air pollution. The dolphin has suffered from the same kind of leprous effacement, and the shell is bone-dry. The Society estimates that repairing the fountain fully will cost two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars.

Some orphans have been successfully adopted, though, and restored and rededicated, among them three in or around Brooklyn's Prospect Park: the 1917 Lafayette Memorial, by Daniel Chester French; the 1905 equestrian statue of the Union general Henry Warner Slocum, by Frederick William MacMonnies; and the 1869 statue of Abraham Lincoln, by Henry Kirke Bush-Brown. The Lincoln statue was rededicated on a sparkling day at the end of June. The ceremony was held in the park's idyllic concert grove, demarcated by a stand of flourishing and astonishingly straight London plane trees, whose rectitude, a bystander said, was nursed along until early in this century by climbers and pruners with handsaws who risked their own limbs on enormous, rickety ladders. Many people connected with the ceremonies had brought with them some bit of lore relating to the statue, its subject, or its site. For example, one of the Park Rangers had with him a tattered copy of the Parks Commissioner's annual report for 1866, which contained a drawing of the statue, then in the planning stage. A member of the Senior Citizens League of Flatbush Choral Group, which sang the national anthem, told us that Lincoln had been psychic. "He had a dream in which he heard the sounds of lamentation," she said. "He saw a casket, walked over to it, and saw that the body inside was Lincoln! He was always my favorite President. Why would someone want to kill such a man?"



We asked Adrian Benepe, the Director of Art and Antiquities for the Parks Department, why some older bronze statues look green and others blue or, like the Lincoln in front of us, deep brown. "The restored statues look much the way they did when they were first unveiled," he said. "The Victorians used something we call statuary brown. A number of color variations are possible in bronze: rich brown, chocolate brown, verdigris, gray brown, green brown. The color depends on the combination of chemicals used in the patination. The Lincoln is the color of an old penny. To get the statue back to that color, the conservator bombarded it with tiny glass beads; the process takes away corrosion and gets down to the bronze surface, which is then repatinated. If you had looked at the left hand before it was restored, you'd have seen that it was very badly cratered. The effects of pollution and acid rain had pitted right into the sculpture. Yet the eating away of bronze was probably worse when everyone was burning coal. The air is actually slightly better now." Mr. Benepe went on to explain how some of the projecting elements on the statue had been made more secure. For instance, Lincoln holds in his left hand a sheaf of papers, the top page bearing a phrase from the Emancipation Proclamation, "shall be forever free," and the sheaf has been repinned to the figure. Two eagles at the base, which replace a stolen pair, are now pinned and epoxied. "We're not having nearly as much bronze theft these days," Mr. Benepe said. "The price of copper is down."

As we studied the statue, its body an earthen note against the deep green of the London planes, its head framed by the blue sky, we noticed that, unlike the Lafayette and Slocum monuments, the Lincoln seemed almost modest; an unemphatic cloak over the President's shoulder is the only element that links it to the classical tradition. We also noticed that the name of the sponsor was nowhere to be seen, the sponsor being the Lincoln Savings Bank, which was celebrating its hundred-and-twenty-third anniversary on the day of the rededication. Joe Masi, the director of marketing for Lincoln Savings, told us that there would be no plaque or other sign. "The statue is the statue of the people," he said. "We're proud of the restoration, and we don't need to be that closely associated with it."



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The Last Treasure

PROUD yachts that would draw gawking admirers in most marinas often bob unnoticed along the South Street Seaport's waterfront acre, so when the schooner UAP Antarctica sailed into town on her way from Paris to Antarctica last month, we went downtown to see if she, too, would be ignored. Not a chance. Docked alongside Pier 17, the UAP Antarctica's shining aluminum hull—a hundred and twenty feet long, and rounded to a walnut-shell shape that her designers hope will bounce up on encroaching ice floes—looked, one passing landlubber said, "more like a submarine than like a schooner." To our eyes she resembled an armored whale. Either way, she's a brawny boat—and for good reason. While sailing in the Antarctic waters, the UAP Antarctica (named for her sponsor, the French insurance firm Union des Assurances de Paris) will serve as a floating base camp for the beginning of the first attempted crossing of the Antarctic continent by dogsled and foot.

We stepped aboard and made our way, past stout spars and ropes as thick as a sailor's wrist, to a roomy, carpeted salon illuminated by tinted skylights. There we met Will Steger and Jean-Louis Etienne, the co-leaders of the trek. The only missing gear, they told us, was a piano they had planned to load aboard in Paris. Etienne had decided at the last minute that it wasn't worth it to keep a piano on board for a whole year just so he could play it a few times before and after the trek.

Steger, a forty-four-year-old American with glacier-blue eyes, told us that he had been smitten with Antarctica's empty white terrain when, as a kid growing up in a suburb of Minneapolis, he traded his hockey stick for a pile of old *National Geographics*. "I remember that big stack," he said. "It took me weeks to go through it. I saw an article about Antarctica, and that really inspired me. But up until the last few years I didn't know for sure how I'd get down there." The spell cast by Antarctica lingered with him, he said, through twenty-four years as a teacher, an Outward Bound instructor, and, finally, a full-fledged explorer with twenty thousand miles of Arctic travel under his belt.

Steger met Etienne, a Frenchman, now forty-two, by sheer accident during a windstorm on the polar ice cap in 1986. "For a whole month, my party hadn't seen another human form," Steger recalls. "It was like finding your brother after not seeing him for twenty years." Steger camped near Etienne that night, and the next day, while sipping tea in Etienne's tent, they discovered that they shared a fascination with the seventh continent. "It was there that we put together a rough, thumbnail scheme for crossing Antarctica," Steger said. After what may stand as the world's northernmost networking session, they exchanged phone numbers and trudged off. Steger, along with a five-person team, eventually made the first confirmed North Pole trip by dogsled without resupply. (Commander Robert E. Peary's 1909 claim is now disputed.) Etienne, on skis, logged the first solo trip to the Pole.

For Etienne, a small, lively man who has the impish manner of a street mime but is actually a physician, that polar excursion was supposed to be the antidote to a lifelong case of wanderlust. "I felt that the North Pole was my last personal challenge," he said. "When I came back, people asked me, 'Do you want to go to the South Pole?' I said, 'No. I don't need to.' " But when he and Steger met again a year later his old enthusiasm for Antarctica was rekindled. "We were like two kids playing at big things," he told us. "We said, 'O.K., we'll do it.' " Having quenched their thirst for record-setting at the North Pole, Steger and Etienne designed the Antarctic traverse as a way to call the world's attention to its last blank spot—a primordial park unmarked by industry or national borders. To dramatize their intention, they recruited team members from the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and Britain. "Amundsen, Peary, and Shackleton went out to discover the world," Etienne said. "Now it's time to protect it. Antarctica is the last place where countries can prove that they can work together. It's the last treasure. After Antarctica, there is nothing else."

More than two years of publicity tours and fund-raising followed—an endurance contest to rival the crossing itself—and now Steger and Etienne are about to exchange the dais for the dogsled and retreat into the pristine whiteness. On the morning of August 1st, their international group, of six men, will mush a team of thirty-six huskies into a southbound trot from Seal Nunataks, on the nub of the Antarctic Peninsula. If all goes well, they will celebrate Thanksgiving at the South Pole, pass through the Area of Inaccessibility—a region that was for many years beyond the reach of aircraft—in December, and arrive by March at the Soviet Mirnyy base, on the eastern edge of the continent. The UAP Antarctica, having sailed southeastward along the coast, will take them aboard and sail for home.

Sometime afterward, Etienne hopes to take the UAP Antarctica north and lodge her in the polar pack ice, where, encased in the frozen Arctic Ocean, she will drift over the top of the world at a pace of about three miles a day toward the thawing waters on the far side. How, we asked, would he occupy himself during the glide, which will take about two years? "I'll play the piano," he said. "And dream."

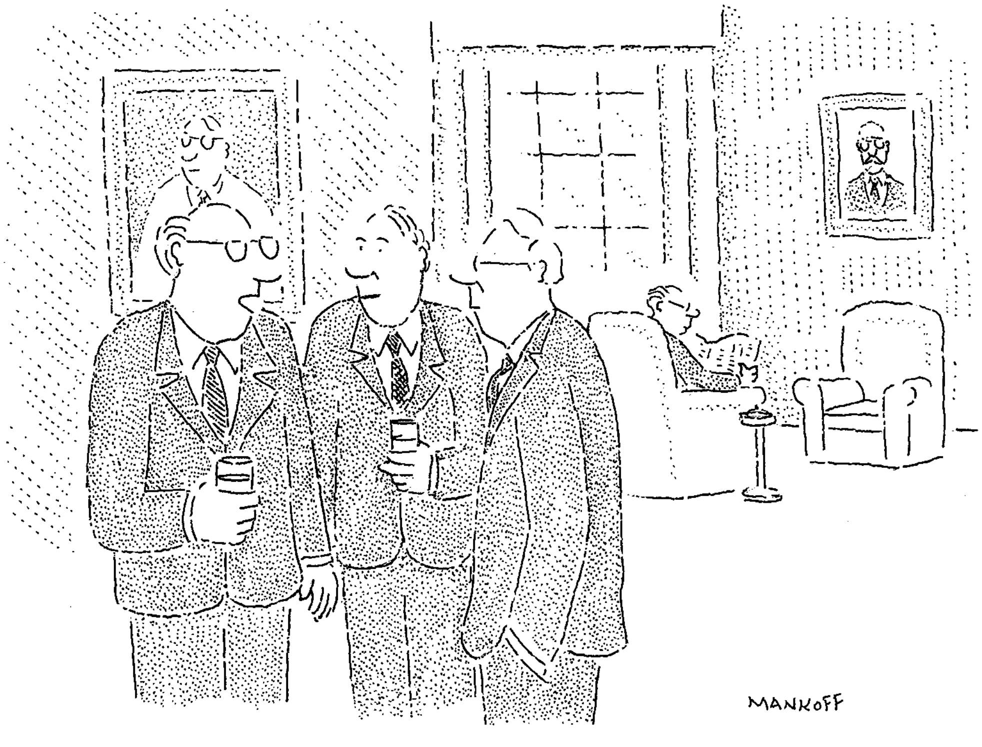
Maker

A GOOD way to spend a morning on the Upper East Side is by trilling a boing at Ben Hume's place. The boing is an instrument that was inspired by a number of ancient stringed instruments, including the setār, the lira, and the chang. Ben Hume's boings are made from two wooden dowels, a single nylon string, a small bridge (cut and bevelled), and an empty Planter's cocktail-peanuts can with the plastic lid in place and a rectangle cut out of the side, so that it will resonate properly. "The whole idea with resonating instruments is to capture a column of air and let it escape in a controlled way, so that it deepens and fills up the sound," Ben says.

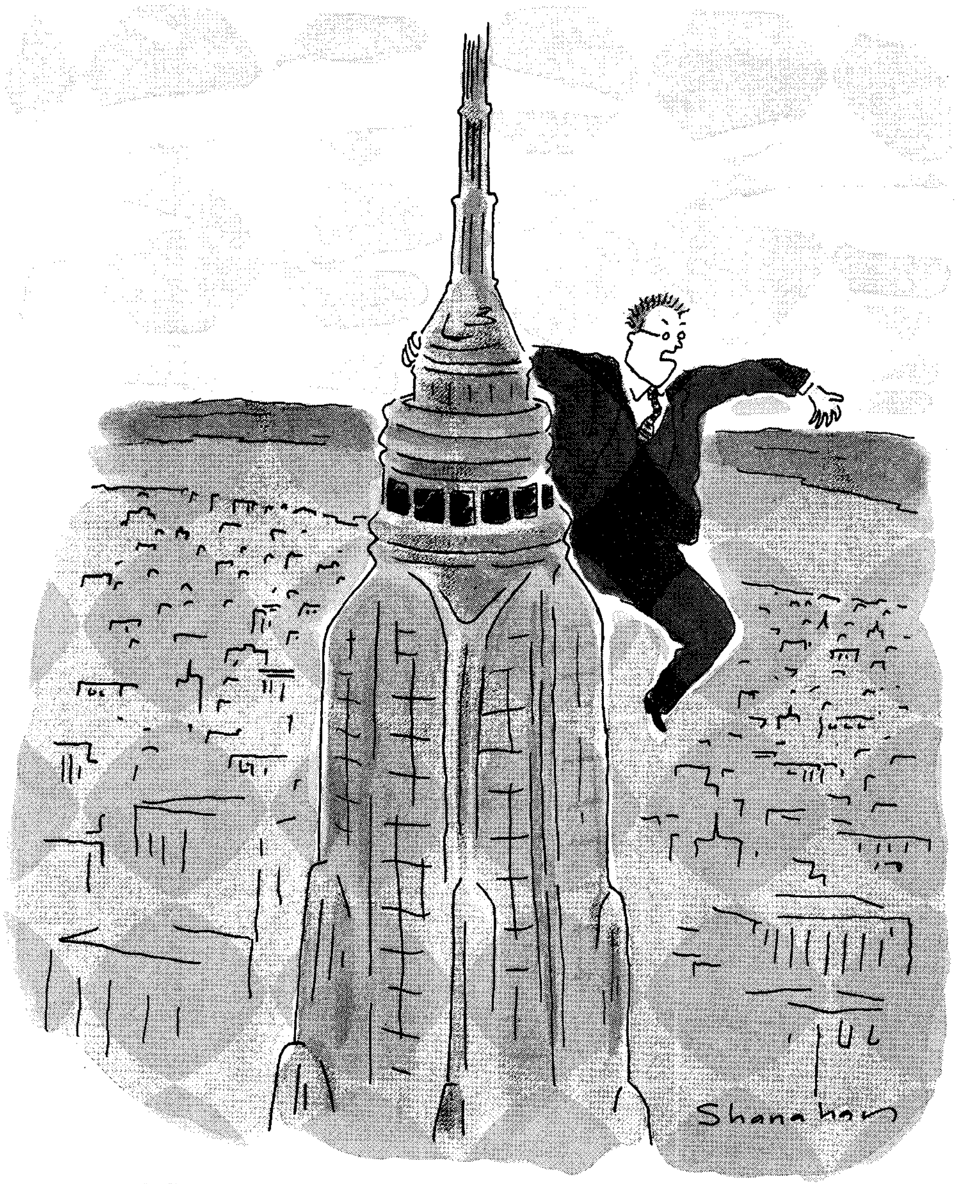
Boings are made for trilling. "People have weird ideas about trills," Ben says. "You hear Barenboim coming out of a cadenza and you think, What a virtuoso!—because he's *leaning* into a trill, ringing back and forth, back and forth. But the reason he's leaning into that trill *at the end* is that it's *recess* for his neurons—just two neurons firing, one and then the other, again and again. A trill is the most restful kind of plucking for your whole body." When you pay a call on Ben Hume at his combined workshop and apartment, just off Madison Avenue in the Eighties, Ben is apt to hand you a boing and teach you how to trill it. (You use the forefinger of the hand with which you clasp the body of the boing.) Then Ben will pick up a boing himself and trill along. His theory is that trilling makes conversation both deeper and more restful. It also creates a background noise that sounds something like a swarm of mosquitoes and something like a particularly inept Appalachian banjo player warming up.

Ben Hume is a maker. Mostly, he makes folk instruments—some of them re-creations of ancient folk instruments. These include versions of the fujara, a traditional Slovak shepherd's flute that stands about eight feet tall; the yidaki, an instrument, used by Australian aborigines in their religious ceremonies, that has the penetration of a tugboat whistle; the krar, a relative of the Greek lyre; the mbira, from southern Africa, a plucked instrument of forged spring steel, which resonates from inside a dried gourd and sounds like water running over pebbles; and the dumbek, a Persian clay drum with a head of dried goatskin. He plays all these instruments gently and caressingly, drawing from them deep and mournful noises.

Recently, Ben decided to make a series of folk instruments for the folk of the Upper East Side. "I've been constructing a mijwiz and playing it," he explained the other day as he and a visitor sat on facing chairs in the disordered kitchen of his apartment, holding boings on their laps and trilling them. "You should understand that a mijwiz, a Middle Eastern instrument, is the same as a zummāra. Both have 'm's and 'z's, so there's some connection there to the root idea of the word 'music'—I'm working on that. They're both reed instruments—double bamboo clarinets that are divided into the harmonic series but with each clarinet just a little bit out of



"As far as I'm concerned, they can do what they want with the minimum wage, just as long as they keep their hands off the maximum wage."



KONG FOR A DAY

tune with the one beside it. That gives you weird shades of color." He picked up a bamboo mijwiz, a little pan-pipe-shaped instrument, and played a few bars; it sounded like what you would get if you made Prince work as a shepherd. "But the indigenous bamboo of this neighborhood is the soda straws from Papaya King, over on Eighty-sixth," Ben went on, and he picked up another mijwiz, this one made from plastic straws with small holes punched in them, and began to play. It sounded reedy and rich, like a kazoo dreaming of becoming a tenor sax.

Ben Hume has lived on the Upper East Side most of his life. His father is the headmaster of a school on East Eighty-ninth Street. Ben, who is now thirty-two, is a scarred veteran of the private schools of the Upper East Side. "I got kicked out of quite a few private schools," he says. "My fault, their fault—I don't know. So I hung around for a while, and I got interested in Buddhism, and then I heard a shakuhachi—this hugely long, deep flute. And I thought, I can make one of those. So I went and bought some plastic tubing and punched some holes in it, more or less at random, and I discovered that I could make ancient instruments. That was about fifteen years ago."

Ben's apartment is filled with materials, including the dried skins of what he refers to as "road-killed" animals. Some of his other materials are easier to find. A project that he has especially intense feelings about is the development of a stringed instrument with a square body and a bent neck—it looks a little like the guitars that women play in analytic-Cubist paintings—which is tuned to a Mongolian pentatonic scale and yet allows the musician to play rock-and-roll chords. Its head is covered with a resonating skin made from a lambskin condom.

If a visitor hangs around Ben Hume's apartment long enough, and shows some facility at trilling the boing, Ben may suggest that they go across the street, and he'll lead the visitor to the Metropolitan Museum. Often he will take his boing with him, and then he will have to call up a friend in the Musical Instruments Department to get a pass for it. The friend, whose name is Joe Peknik, will remind Ben that he ought to return his last visitor's pass. Then Joe will take Ben and his companion up into the seldom visited Musical Instruments Department, and Joe will open a tall, crowded glass vitrine, lined with velvet, in which hang forty-two of Ben's instruments. The Met doesn't mind if Ben plays his instruments, because the sound of them mooing and booming—Ben is good on *volume*—attracts crowds to the Musical Instruments Department. The other morning, in a thirty-minute impromptu concert, Ben played the yidaki, the mbira, the krar, and three kinds of fujara—fir, cherry, and redwood. He also played a bamboo horn from Persia called the karna (sultry), the Pontic lira (high-strung), the Asian fiddle (down-home), the zarb (an Iranian drum; cheerful), the cup gong (Japanese; bright and insistent), the Persian sitar (just insistent), the Mongolian chang, the kadum (his own invention, based on the Iranian tar; very psychedelic), the kāmanja (from Persia), and the ratchet. The crowd that had gathered gave him a big hand. Someone on the staff of the Met had been ready to vacuum the rug, but he waited patiently, and even raptly, until Ben finished. Then he looked down at the long, inviting coil of hose in his hand. He detached it from the body of the vacuum. And then, leaning down and giving a nod to Ben, he played it.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

EACH night, Uncle Gabe divides the daybed and gives the top half to Uncle Len: "Here, you take the mattress, I'll take the box spring." They lie stretched out, side by side, in the main area of the apartment, while I sleep around the corner, in the short end of the el.

Sleep, always an easy solace before, is now elusive. I waken in the dark, yanked as if by a crane from my dreams, to reacquaint myself with what Uncle Len calls "the setup." No one regards the setup as permanent. Arrangements, I hear the visitors whisper, will be made. It is expected that other relatives—more logical choices than my uncles to raise an eight-year-old girl—will come and "take" me.

Uncle Gabe arrived first, three weeks ago, to watch me while my mother, Rosie, was in the hospital. He expected to stay for only a day or two. But the days turned to weeks, and one afternoon he returned to the apartment and told me that Rosie had died.

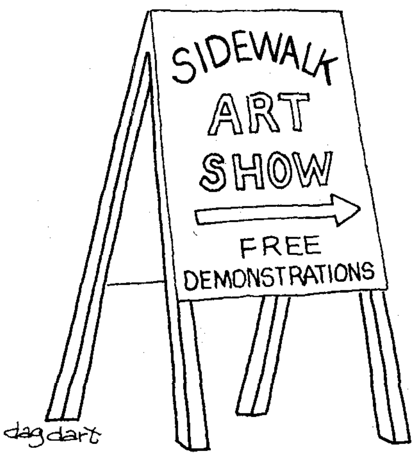
No one said why she died, but I heard a neighbor whisper that she was "riddled with it." "Riddled" made me think of my father, who had died in battle four years earlier. I knew him only as he appeared in a single photograph. This picture, technically black-and-white, taken of a blond officer in uniform, seemed to have acquired the khaki tones of its military subject. Pale, overexposed, the snapshot seemed to offer a prediction in the dissolving dazzle of the soldier at its center. So radiant was he, he might have been the light that blanched the negative. His image was so faint that it did not surprise me to hear that he had disappeared completely. What his death meant to me, at age four, was that my mother and I could stop waiting for his return. We broke out of a holding pattern of living in relatives' apartments throughout the city, and moved to a studio of our own.

This apartment wasn't much more than a fly ball's distance from Yankee Stadium. During the season, my mother and I had lain awake, bathed in the violet glow cast by twi-night doubleheaders, listening to megaphoned moans and cries of "It's a homer! It's a homer!" Some nights, our apartment house would tremble, reverberating to the roar of victory.

Now this one-room apartment, my mother Rosie's hard-won cubicle that was our special place, has become an emergency bivouac. At night, my uncles camp out on the floor. By day we sit shivah. Because we actually quake on our plain pine bench, I translate this as "sitting shiver." While condolence callers come and go, carrying coffee cakes, my Uncles Len and Gabe sit shivering with me.

Uncle Len, Gabe's older brother, materialized in 3-M overnight. He was there somehow in the morning when I awoke with a belly clutch to the first day of life without Rosie. Len was a startling sight in the pre-dawn dark. At six feet six, and sitting in the shadows dressed in black, he appeared—an apparition: the Lincoln Memorial in 3-M. The mystery of his midnight arrival was consistent with Uncle Len's history: he has long been an enigma to the rest of the family. At forty, he is two years older than Gabe, and several inches taller, and he casts a very long shadow. His personal style seems inspired by an espionage novel. He has always worn a hat and heavy trenchcoat. He does in fact work part time as a private investigator, although he's characteristically vague as to whom and what he investigates. He loves to cover his tracks. Officially, he lives in a series of hotels in mid-Manhattan, but he seems to travel almost all the time. He communicates usually by postcards without return addresses, or by recorded voice tapes sent through the mails.

He turned up in 3-M with only one change of clothing, packed in a manila envelope. I attributed his odd choice of luggage to the emergency situation—that he had not had time to pack. Soon I learn that he never packs. He has to "travel light" to protect his cover. On his secret missions, he carries only shorts, socks, a razor, and his work in progress, a biography of Abraham Lincoln.



Uncle Gabe is also a writer, but of a different sort: he composes love songs and what he calls Jewish Gospel. Before Rosie died and shiver started, Uncle Gabe sang all the time. He belted out his own lyrics in the shower: "We are standing by the sea, and demanding to be free."

Writing is a physical act for Gabe. "I have to keep churning it out," he explains. As he works, he drinks glass after glass of hot tea and mops at beads of sweat on his brow. He often has to pause to wipe his eyeglasses across his shirtfront: the lenses cloud as he works up steam. Although Gabe is a practicing Jew, he sings with either a black intonation or a country-and-Western twang. Most of his lyrics are songs of unrequited love: "I'm lookin' for an on-de-level lady . . . "

At thirty-eight, Gabe is still called "the kid" in the family. He looks twenty years younger. "What's your secret?" people ask. "Non-living" is his answer. No longer a boy but still boyish, with adulthood still somehow up ahead, Gabe didn't come at life head on but dodged it, as if in a pickup game of basketball. Often, his hat fell off behind him. Gazing skyward, Gabe always seems slightly abstracted—alarmed and amused by his secret thoughts. As if in flight from social pressure to "settle down," Uncle Gabe always takes the streets running. When he first came to stay with me, we ran a zigzag course home from school. Gabe likes to play as much as I do, and he invented his own games. "The chase is on!" he would announce. No matter where we were—on the street or in the park—that was my cue to run full speed ahead. "Come on, Lily," he would say, "the chase is on." And off we'd go, flying down footpaths and leapfrogging over boulders.

But now we have to stay in the apartment and sit on the plain pine benches, in accordance with Jewish law. We also have to wear sneakers—"God doesn't want us to wear hard soles," says Gabe; God, it appears, wants us to wear Keds—and we are not allowed to play. Uncle Gabe, Len, and I sit quite still on the shiver seats. The only sign of levity is my white cat, Sparkle, who swings from the rungs of my seat and uses the new wood as a scratching post. Stimulated by the comings and goings of visitors, she runs sudden races with herself around the room.

For seven days, we receive condolence callers. The callers come bearing platters and platitudes. They tell me "Rosie's in Heaven." How I chafe at that! She would never go without me. Mrs. Hassan, the downstairs neighbor, speaks with what strikes me as morbid zest: "First the father, then the mother. What will happen to her now?"

After the mourners depart, Uncle Gabe, Len, and I are alone together in a new way. On the seventh night, the last night of shiver, I hear them whisper around the corner of the el from their palletlike arrangement on the floor. They trade questions without answers: "Do you think they would let two O.B.s have her?" I don't know who "they" are, but I know "two O.B.s" is family shorthand for "two old bachelors." Mrs. Hassan has already loudly questioned their competence in the hall—"What do two unmarried men know about keeping house and raising a child?"—and provided her own answer: "Nothing."

When Gabe and Len fall asleep, I lie awake and wonder, "Where is Rosie, really?" During the days, I have pretended to believe that she has died, but I suspect the truth is that she has been spirited away to a secret hiding place. I consider the possibilities. The seashore? The mountains? Another hospital? In the courtyard of AnaMor Towers (named for the owners, Anna and Morris Snezak), I have heard tales of people who became "mental" and were hidden from their families for years. "We were told that she died; then we found out that they put her away." Someone might be keeping her somewhere, against her will, or it was possible that she had amnesia.

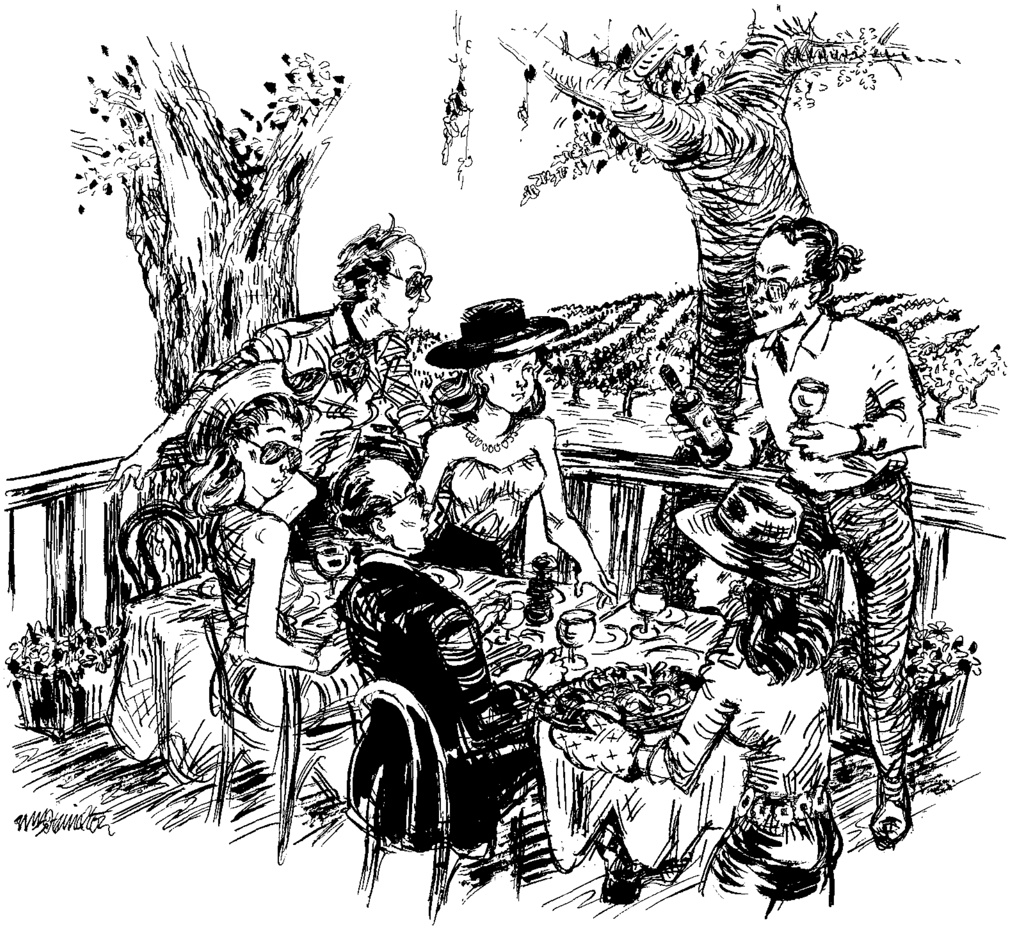
My best friend, Susan Hassan, agrees: my mother is being held somewhere, probably by force. Susan lives downstairs in 2-L, a "junior four" that her mother, Mrs. Hassan, cleans with ferocity. When no one is home in her detergent-scented apartment, Susan has often led me into the mint-green quiet of the master bedroom and demonstrated how her parents' bed splits apart, in obedience to Jewish law. During "forbidden times" the bed must divide, sending Mr. and Mrs. Hassan off in opposing directions.

Often in the afternoons, Susan and I have tiptoed across the plastic path that marks the well-travelled route to the Hassan bed, and entered, instantly, into the trance of play. At ten, Susan is two years older than I am, and an aeon more mature. She already has pointy breasts that other neighborhood girls accuse her of "setting" with bobby pins. Her breasts are often on display in her ongoing theatricals, which involve parading in her mother's full slip and mink stole for a character known only as "The Sailor."

My own favorite game involves American Indians—I have an alter ego who is a Sioux—but Susan will have none of my story lines. She insists on plots concerning the Sailor. He is shipping out, and they must make love before he sails.

Whenever we play, Susan incants her instructions in tones reserved for somnambulant afternoon encounters. "We have to be here. . . . We have to turn off the light. . . . We have to lower the blinds. . . . We have to . . . We have to . . . " At a certain point, "we" would usually become "you," and it would be "You have to . . . " What I mainly "have to" do is become the Sailor. Following orders, I would climb out Susan's window, stand on the fire escape, and peek through the venetian blinds, and at a predetermined moment I would reënter.

Susan entered life unwanted, as Mrs. Hassan often recounts: "I had my family. Two grown children. Susan was an accident." Mrs. Hassan has even gone so far as to relate the story of Susan's conception, in the mint-green



"I want to introduce you guys to what I feel is a really gifted young Zinfandel."

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bedroom: "I had nothing to do with it. I was asleep." Perhaps because of the circumstances of her birth, Susan's literal place in 2-L is none too secure. She sleeps in a narrow bed wedged near the window at an odd angle in her parents' bedroom.

The night before the shiver started, I was told to sleep over with Susan. Mr. and Mrs. Hassan had lain down to an instant sleep on their divided bed. (It must have been a forbidden time.) Beside me, Susan twisted in her sleep, nursing the corner of her pillowcase. Squeezed into my slice of space between Susan and the window, I looked out and saw the street metamorphose: the sidewalks turned white and gave off a malignant shimmer, as if rhinestones had been ground into the pavement. I had never seen the street at 3 A.M. before—it seemed covered by an out-of-season snow. Inside the bedroom, two floor-model fans made the curtains blow. My top sheet billowed over my head. I buried my face in the pillow but experienced only a momentary descent into sleep; then came a body-twitching recall to consciousness. Susan seemed to sense need nearby: she patted me twice, as though to say, "Everything will be all right. It's just the middle of the night." Susan's silence gave me more solace than all the words of sympathy. The next day, Susan and I hid the costume jewelry I had bought at Woolworth's months before, in preparation for my mother's next birthday—an ivory heart-shaped pin, with matching earrings. We tucked the jewelry into a cardboard box that had once held cough drops. I must save them. When I find Rosie, I can give them to her.

FIRE

A fire burns along the eastern rim
of mountains. We in the valley
see it as a celestial prank, for
in the summer haze the mountains
themselves are lost, but as the night
deepens the fire grows more golden
and dense. On this calm ground
the raw raging of burning winds
that cuts the eyes and singes the hair
is seen as a pencil-line of light
moving southward. I know my son
is there, has been for four days,
moved in and out by helicopters
with his squad of firefighters.
By now, without sleep, they've
gone beyond exhaustion. Some can't
waken, some are crazed, a few go
on—the oldest—working steadily.
I know this from the stories he
has told me of other famous fires
from which he returned as from
a dream, his eyes glazed with seeing,
his sense of time and place gone.
He would raise his shaking right arm
above his head, and with his palm
open sweep it toward me again
and again and speak without grammar,
sometimes without words, of what
had taken place. I knew it was true.
Now in the cool of evening I catch
a hint of the forest, of that taking
of sudden breath that pines demand.
It's on my skin, a light oil, a sweat
born of some forgotten leaning into fire.

—PHILIP LEVINE

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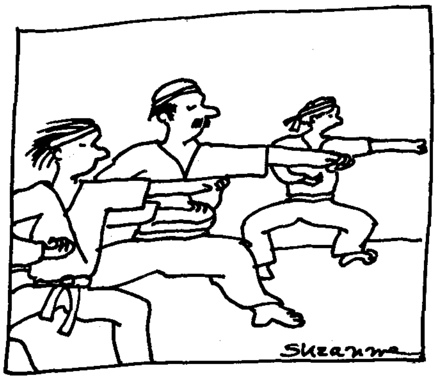
THE day our shiver bench is thrown out onto the street, Susan appears at my door to say goodbye. She is leaving for camp. I cannot say goodbye. I plead with my uncles to be allowed to go with her. Susan says that she cannot bear to be apart from me, either. We must go together.

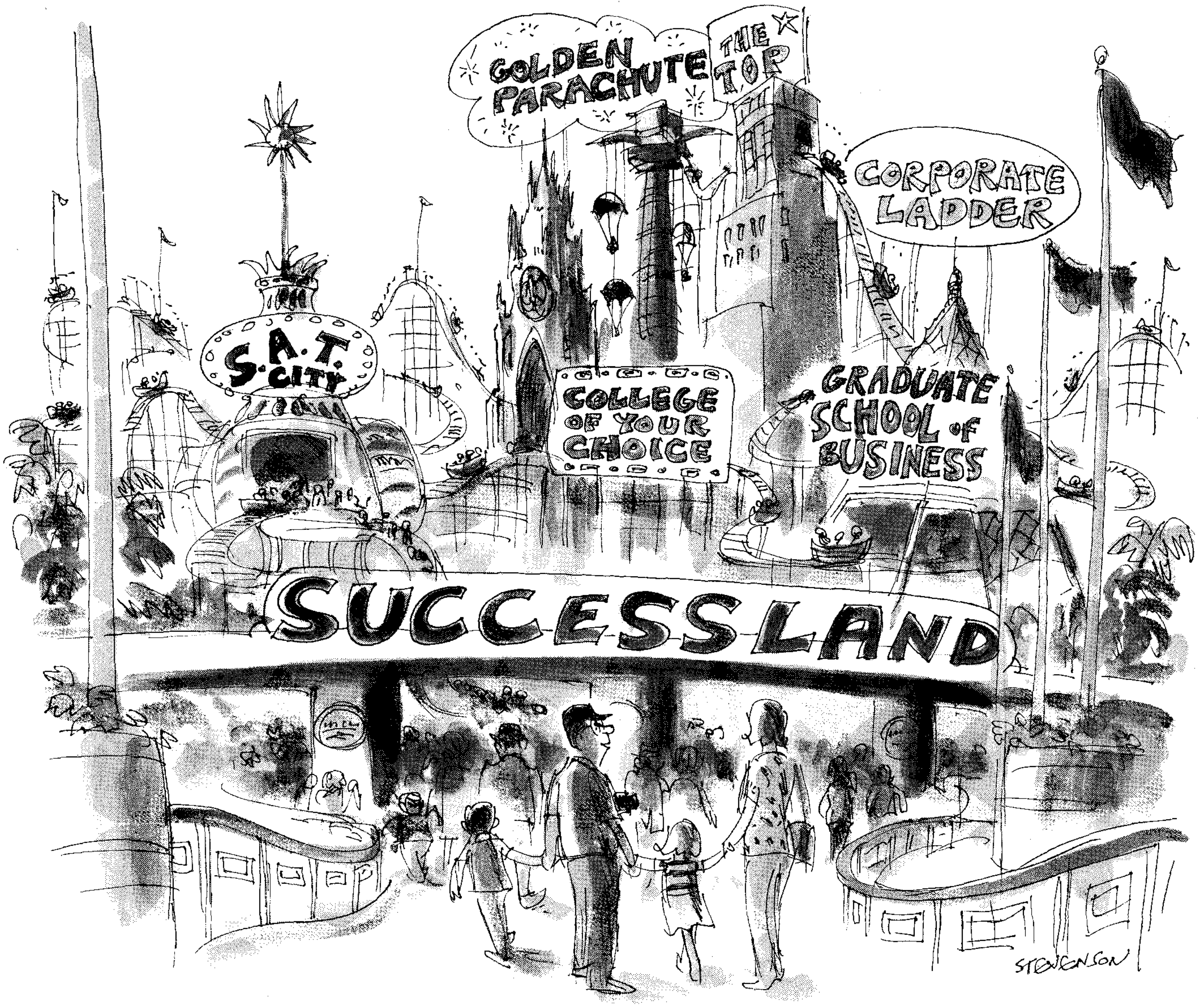
My uncles give permission—it is a temporary solution, while they make new arrangements. (Whenever my uncles mention finding a larger apartment, I resist. I say only that I want to hang on to this one a while longer; the truth is that I expect Rosie to return and want as little changed as possible. When Uncle Len started to repaint a cabinet, I stopped him and said, "No, it must be the color it always was.") I have hopes for the trip to the country, for that seems like a place where my mother may be kept hidden. She always loved the mountains and the forest.

There are distant rumblings from those mountains—reservations have to be made years in advance; the desirable Camp Ava is booked up. The season is set, the bunkhouses are filled, but because of the "tragic circumstances," the camp's New York office tells us, space will be created: there will be one more bed, for one more camper. The camp needs time to prepare, however, so I will have to join Susan a bit later. "Don't worry," says Susan's father, who helped pull strings to get me in, "you won't be far behind."



I am physically not far behind on the day of Susan's departure—I chase her parents' car up to where it gets on the Major Deegan Expressway, screaming and waving, calling, "Susan, Susan, Susan. . . . "

I count the days until I can be with her again. I say her name over and over as I lie sleepless at night. When I join Susan at camp the world will be set right. Somehow the crisis can still be reversed and Rosie can be restored to me. Already I have tried willing time backward—"Please let it be January



"It's more relevant than some of the other theme parks we've been to."

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again"—and I have invoked one new "charm" after another. As I approach AnaMor Towers, I walk only on the curb. Or I skip every crack on the pavement. I eat only foods that Rosie and I have eaten together (which limits my main-course menu to burned hamburgers, hot dogs, tuna croquettes, and cheese omelettes). And when I wake in the morning I squeeze my eyes shut and will my mother to reappear.

So far, none of this has had any effect, but I hold the last charm, the most potent, in reserve. If I call her name aloud, she will have to return. In a real emergency she has never failed to materialize. Once, she heard me scream from a street four blocks away. Yes, she will come when I give the ultimate call. We are playing some extreme game of hide-and-seek. Sometimes I even whip open my closet door, to catch her. But I know that I must save the secret summons, save the certain charm, for last.

Now I am officially "registered" for Camp Ava but must keep waiting for a bed to open up. In the interim, Uncle Gabe takes me to shops recommended by Mrs. Hassan to buy the required camp clothes. Uncle Gabe always wears out-of-style, saggy suits, with a beat-up straw hat and mismatched tie and shirt, but at the stores I discover that he knows even less about children's clothes than he does about his own. He is my innocent victim in wardrobe selection: I want to look older, so I insist we buy size 10—two full sizes too large for me. I model enormous shorts and T-shirts that hang to my thighs; neither of us knows they don't fit. We leave in satisfaction over having bought "everything."

Waiting for Camp Ava somehow makes our existence at the apartment seem even more transient; the nights pass in a restless fever, as if the impermanence of our situation prevented deep sleep. We sleep in the fitful fashion of troops ("Three people in a one-room apartment," as Mrs. Hassan keeps saying) waiting to be shipped out.

Only the insomnia is new; transience is something I've always known. Before Rosie rented this studio, our first real home, we had slept on sofas and collapsible cots, in odd slices of space in others' apartments. For a time, at a cousin's house, we slept under a massive dining table, wedged among the mahogany legs. I didn't mind—it even had an accidental kind of elegance; when the tablecloth was left on, my mother and I luxuriated in the canopy effect. All I ever needed to drift off was to see her familiar silhouette—the curlicues of her hair, the deep curve of her hip. She was the single constant in my changing nights, my campsite mate in the carved forest. There can be no rest until I am with her again.

ON the day I depart for camp, Uncle Len also leaves, carrying his manila envelope—to take care of "personal matters"—so Uncle Gabe is my only escort. We board the bus with other passengers escaping from the city heat, the softening asphalt. The moment we pull onto the open road, Uncle Gabe gets motion sickness. His nausea is profound. Although he often writes songs and poems celebrating travel, he vomits at fifteen-minute intervals during the entire two-hour bus ride. We arrive at a mountain hamlet aptly named Upper Craysdale, and are taken by taxi—with Uncle Gabe retching out the window—to Camp Ava.

Camp Ava is weirdly situated on a mountainside that seems too steep to support the camp's few wooden structures: the entire camp, including the Camp Ava sign, lists to the left, following in a physical way the political bent of the camp, which was founded by Socialist labor-union leaders.

We arrive in the pink of sunset. Uncle Gabe carries an overnight bag, and I drag a pillowcase, packed by Uncle Len. "A pillowcase is a lot like a duffelbag," Len decreed. In the pillowcase I have hidden the heart-shaped pin and earrings I am still planning to give to my mother. "Look," a camper whispers. "She doesn't have a suitcase. All she has is a pillowcase."

Clutching the pillowcase, I cross a balding grass lot to a flat building marked "Office." As Gabe and I walk, a bugle blast over a loudspeaker stops us in our tracks, and a man's voice bellows, "Everybody to the Social Hall."

Dozens of uniformed campers, wearing green-and-white Camp Ava T-shirts, move en masse to the main building. As I scan this crowd for Susan, I catch in my peripheral vision a scene so senseless and frightening that I edit it at once from my immediate consciousness. I will review the apparition later—a little girl, naked and silent, scampering across the yard. The naked girl suggests my worst fears will be fulfilled here, but she is moving so fast that I can doubt having seen her. The uniformed girls are not reassuring as they file past, pointing at me. They arrange themselves according to bunk on the lawn.

I have arrived on the seventh day of a ten-week season; it may as well have been the seventh century. Friendships have been sealed in blood. Enmity and war have been declared between rival bunkhouses. "I hate all Bluebells," I overhear. Then: "They're not as bad as Violets."

I search the crowd for my one familiar person, and there she is, with her cap of cropped hair, her golden face, the famous pointy nipples outlined under an Ava T-shirt. She is walking arm in arm with a pink, sunburned blonde who appears too plump for her shirt and shorts. Susan spots me. She recognizes me but appears a bit vague, as if she does know me but isn't certain from where.

"Susan?" I call.

She runs to me, her arms open for an embrace, but a man with a whistle around his neck comes between us. He is a great bulk of a man—a brisket wearing Bermudas. Even his face is the color of corned beef as he reddens in rage. "Get back" are his words of welcome.

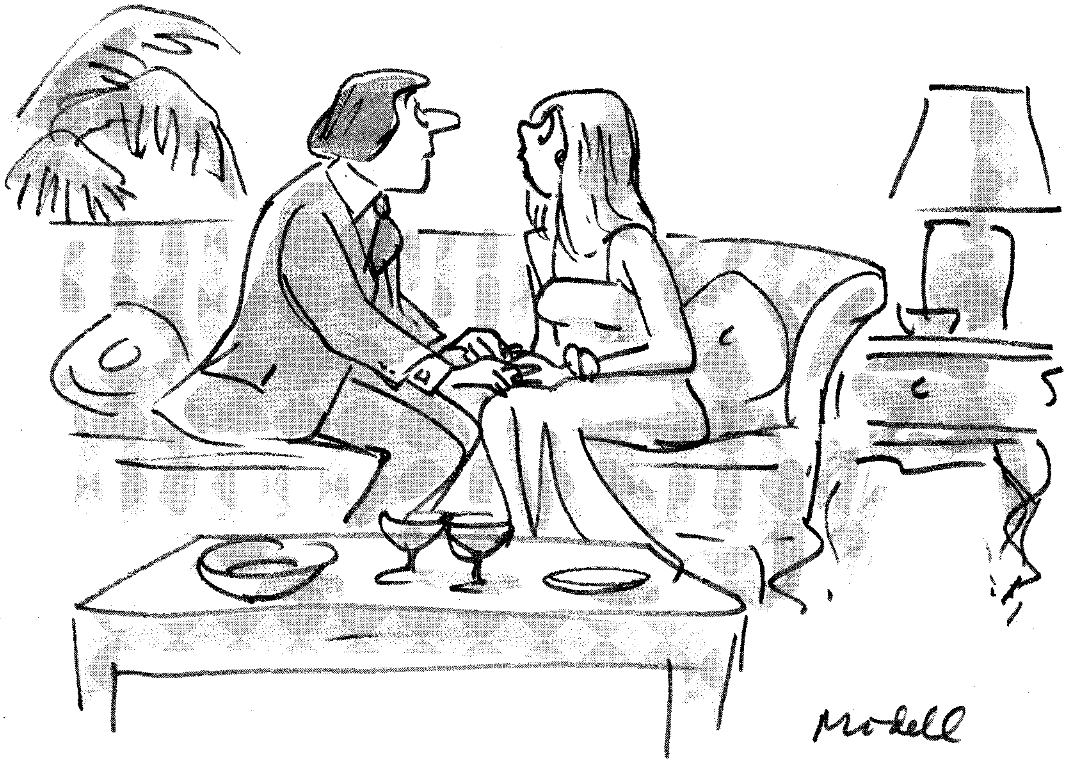
Manny Rubell, as I shall quickly learn, runs the camp in the same spirit in which he conducts his garment-workers' union during an unpopular strike. He orders Susan back to her line, and confronts Gabe and me. "What are you doing here? It's after hours. No visitors."

Uncle Gabe, relentless in his politeness no matter how rude the conduct of others, begins a formal introduction: "Hello, I'm Gabe Shaine, and this is my niece, Lily. We would like—"

Manny interrupts him: "Go see Ava first."

Nodding, his mouth open in an "Oh" of assent, Gabe leads me, as instructed, to the founder of Camp Ava—Ava.

Ava, arms folded, stands sentinel at the entry to the Social Hall. She seems ancient—a



"For one thing, our colognes clash."

Gypsy crone—in her paisley skirt and cherry-pit necklace. Her features are heavy, as if whittled with a dull knife.

She seems to have some relationship to Manny—perhaps "romantic." In certain aspects, they appear to have switched sexes: Manny has breasts that bobble under his T-shirt, and Ava has whiskers under her chin. And when Ava speaks a male voice emanates from her, barking commands. "Light," she says, holding up her cigarette toward Manny. And Manny has a high voice that squeaks out a steady whine of double negatives that stress the impossibility of the situation. "I don't know nothing about this one" is the way he introduces me. "Where are we supposed to put her?"

As I stand, twisting the corners of my packed pillowcase, Uncle Gabe recites the details of the registration procedures we followed in the city.

What do they know "down there"? It turns out "they don't know nothing, neither." Manny has escalated to triple negatives in his exasperation with the situation. The camp is filled. There is no bed.

Ava inhales, looks at me through the smoke. She makes sounds, officially affirmative "Yeah, yeah"s but expressed in a similarly negative tone, which says that she has seen it all before.

Blue-green light suffuses the campground, camouflaging the shabbiness of the structures. A piny scent fills the air, and an electric chitter sounds from the grass. I squint, trying to align the real Camp Ava with my imagined Camp Ava. That camp, a Hansel and Gretel–style forest complete with rippling brook and gingerbread cottages, is so real to me that I cannot quite acknowledge that it doesn't exist. I had so completely envisioned the place that I feel it must be somewhere—maybe on the other side of the mountain. I store away the image of my ideal camp to examine later and try to accept what I see before me in the growing dark.

Manny and Ava complete a chorus of disgust and disapproval for camp management people in the city. "They don't know what we have to deal with up here," Ava concludes. Then she tells Gabe to catch the last bus back to town. She says she will take care of me.

A question unspoken in his eyes, Gabe seems to walk backward, as Ava leads me away. She takes me to a bungalow no more than twelve feet square and identifiable as hers by the Gypsy skirts slung drying over a pipe.

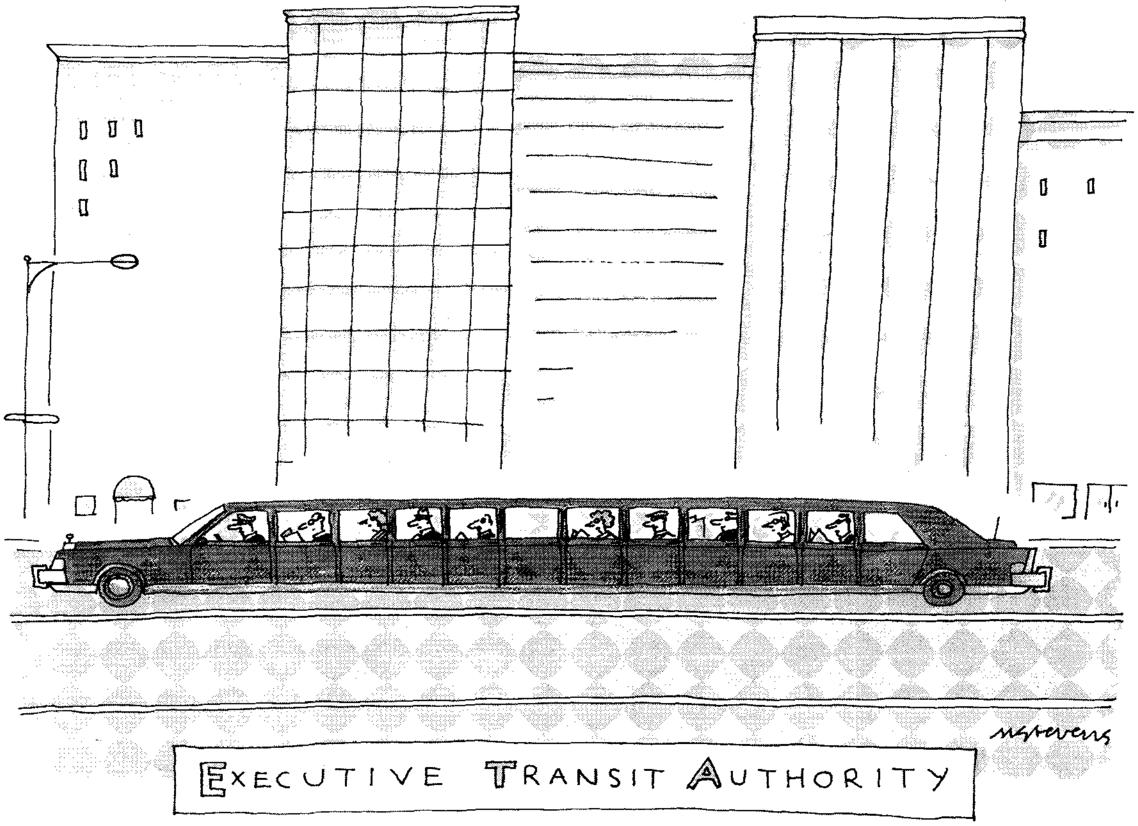
She snaps open a folding cot, slams it in place, and tosses a thin mattress on top. "Just for tonight," she says. "I can't sleep with a presence in my room. If I wanted a presence, I would have stayed with my husbands." Then she yanks open the window beside the cot. The window frames a bough, hung with ripe cherries. "You will want to reach out and pick those cherries," Ava predicts. "Don't do it. I know how many are there."

THAT night, I lie awake, too aware of the strangeness of these surroundings and of Ava to sink into the comfort of sleep. Ava emits an odd series of sounds—lip smacks and grunts. About a half hour after she goes to sleep, she barks, "Don't do that," in the exact tone she uses to shout at campers. After that she keeps yelling orders, but fatigue finally catches up with me, and I go to sleep. Sometime before dawn, I'm jolted by her hoarse command: "Get up."

No place could be as foreign as Ava's bungalow before dawn. There seems to be fog inside, hanging in wisps between us, and the cold air is scarcely distinguishable from the chill outdoors.

A "follow me" crook of her fingers. She leads me out of the building, through a misty meadow, then down a narrow footpath. At the end of this trail is a pond, almost completely obscured in the haze. A doe, drinking, looks up, and leaps away, white tail waving. I barely register this astonishing sight when I turn to see Ava step out of her nightgown.

She stands, naked, her skin hanging from her bones like a leather casing a size large on her angular frame. She has a brown, shrivelled look, rather like the dried fruit she subsists on, as a practicing fruitarian. She raises both arms in the classic diver's pointed



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pose. I see her breasts sway—they have a sad, emptied look. Then she arches her back, dives in, and disappears beneath the white fog.

Ava and I have awakened too early: camp doesn't begin for three hours. We walk in silence back to the bungalow and sit on our cots and regard one another until summoned by a bugle blast and an amplified voice without a hint of cheer: "Rise and shine, rise and shine. . . . Wake up, all Bluebells, rise and shine. . . ."

Then Ava and I walk to the cafeteria for breakfast. As we cross the patchy lawn, wet with dew, I plead my case with Ava: "Oh, please let me stay in the bunkhouse with Susan. I'll do anything—anything."

No, I'm told—if I am to sleep anywhere it will be with my age group, the eight-year-old Bluebells.

Susan. Susan. I spot her in a row of ten-year-old Dandelions filing toward their table. I dash to her side, only to reach her at the moment that her buddy, the plump blonde, takes the seat beside her. Susan makes the introductions, her almond eyes slanting even more than usual (deceit?). The blonde is Rebecca Zalotow, and she lives near us back in the city, I'm told. Rebecca is wearing a sailor cap, which instantly makes me suspect that she is now the Sailor. (Later in the day, I chance to run past the bunkhouse and spy Rebecca heaving herself over the window ledge. She has her leg caught over the sill and is suspended, squealing. I give her a boost up, with an interlocking finger grip, and hear Susan's voice, thick with passionate petulance inside: "Hurry, your ship is leaving in an hour.") Nonetheless, I am still eager to stay at Susan's side. I am willing to abdicate and let Rebecca serve as the Sailor. I never volunteered for that duty anyway.

No sooner am I at Susan's breakfast table, trying to wedge myself onto the bench, than I feel the heavy heat of the law at my back. Manny lifts me, yanking me up by my underarms, and carries me to another bunk table.

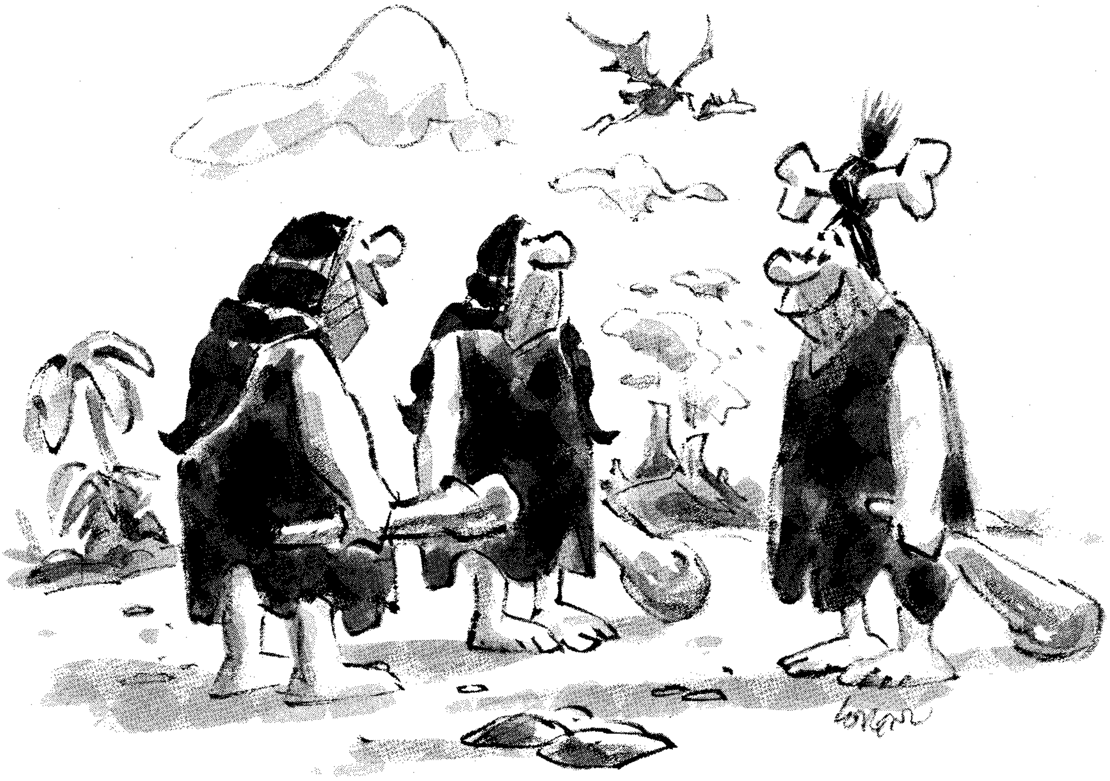
"You must sit with the Violets," he says—a name I mishear with unconscious accuracy as the Violents. Why? There's no logic to this situation: the Violets are two years older than the Dandelions. They wear brassieres under their T-shirts. The Violets are camper-counsellors, and they seem not to know whether to exercise authority or obey.

The camper-counsellors order me to drink two glasses of prune juice—an unnecessary precaution at Camp Ava, where the bacteria-laden food holds the children in an abdominal grip. Although never listed on the official schedule, the main activity at Camp Ava is being doubled over in an outhouse. At every meal someone bolts from the table, suffering an intestinal attack. At this first breakfast a boy runs to retch at the rear of the mess hall, while the other children circle his vomit and analyze its molecular makeup.

Taking advantage of the distraction, I boomerang to Susan's side. She takes me to see her bunkhouse: rows of cots with folded blankets, a bulletin board with cards from home pinned to the cork. She lets me in on the obvious: Camp Ava is a mistake. Susan is waiting for her parents to visit, so that we can escape by hiding in the back seat of their car. Until then, we must keep our wits about us, Susan warns me. "A lot of kids here have dirty minds," she says. "Terrible things can happen to you if you're not careful."

If Susan is frightened, I should be doubly so; she has a higher threshold. Meanwhile, Susan tells me her new friend, Rebecca Zalotow, is "all right" and that there will be some benefit in the friendship for me, too. Mr. Zalotow is a shoe manufacturer, and through complicated negotiations with Manny and Ava he has arranged to sell us sandals at incredible discounts. (It is revealed later that Manny and Ava have gotten a kickback on the shoe business, and they've reciprocated by waiving Rebecca's camp tuition.)

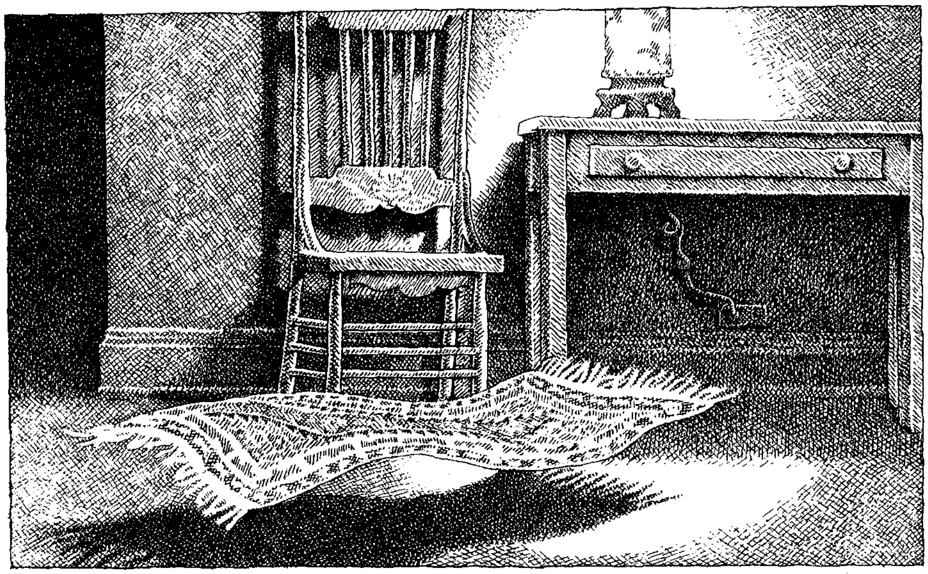
That evening, Mr. Zalotow pulls up in a battered sedan and displays his wares. He whistles softly, and we tiptoe to the open trunk of his car, where he has sandal samples. (It turns out he is working yet another angle, in which he withholds some surplus sandal profit from Manny and Ava.) Mr. Zalotow is pink and plump, like his daughter, but he seems kindly enough as he sweats through his shirt and talks "straps." I select a pink plastic model and slip him a single dollar bill, my entire allow-



"Retro, but I love it!"

ance, as a deposit. He vows to return in two weeks with the real sandals, in my size.

By the time Mr. Zalotow reappears, I'm past caring that he has come back with an entirely different pair of shoes—instead of the pink, strappy number, he gives me a pair of mustard-colored moccasins. I don't understand how he could make such a mistake, but I give him the remainder of my life savings (six dollars) and run off in the wrong shoes.



THE PERSIAN CARPET

I AM living in flight from my bunkmates, the Violents, who have sworn to "strip" me before the season is over. They have stripped each other repeatedly, and I'm the only prey left. Hanging on to my weak-waisted underpants, I spend most of my time hiding.

Each day, the Violets spend several hours lying in ambush outside the boys' latrine, hoping to see the boys pee. At night, the older, or more "developed," girls play male roles, so that everyone can practice for the romances that lie directly ahead. "We have to fake it; we need experience" is an oft-stated remark.

Not all the Violets need practice. One has "experience." Toni Bloom, whose neck is already ringed with the purple hickeys of diverted lust, claims that she has made a boy camper-counsellor "hard"—a condition she describes as irreversible. "I'm going all the way this summer," Toni says. Meanwhile, she leads the strip raids in the communal shower. With a high cry, she seizes a wet, naked girl each morning or evening and tosses the victim onto the playing field. This was what I had seen on the night of my arrival. (That girl reverted to thumb-sucking and was now always last in her bunk line—one of the many casualties staggering around Ava.)

In this atmosphere, I become expert at dodging. I dart to the shower before anyone wakes, or rely on my daily dip in the pond to keep clean. I take to a feral existence, still sleeping in the Violents' bunk but at all other times haunting the fringes of the camp, often near the garbage cans, with the raccoons. By now, I also have the stomach trouble and have joined the conga line of agony outside the outhouses. Woozy and miserable, on the run from the Violents (who keep threatening "You're next"), I have only one goal left in life: to be allowed to move into the same bunkhouse with Susan.

A BUNK has opened up. One of the ten-year-olds has been fortunate—she got sick enough to be sent home. Susan shows me her vacated bed—the cot beside her own, with the sheets stripped and a frayed blanket folded at the foot. The mattress is thin, lumpy, and stained, but, oh, how I want to sleep on it. I turn to prayer: "Please, God, just let me have this bed."

I lie down to get the feel and am spotted by Susan's counsellor, who reports me to Manny. Manny looms above me and picks me up. He is carrying me out of the bunkhouse when, for the first time, I decide to fight back: I kick, surprising myself as well as Manny when the toe of my Ked hits Manny between the legs. He drops me and starts howling.

I'm off and running, round the bend of the driveway, past the Social Hall, through the chain-link gates, and onto the paved road. Down, down, my sneakers pound the asphalt: a steep descent. I hear Manny yell after me: "Look at that crazy kid, running away. Let her go."

And away I go, fast, with the exhilaration of escape. I will run to New York. I run for what seems to be a mile, all downhill, hurtling forward. The descent is so pitched I feel I could topple over. Then the road snaking down the mountainside takes on an unfamiliar look. I see trees, boulder formations I don't remember. Is this the way we came here? How far is it to the Bronx?

A stitch in my side, and a pang in my heart. I pause, gasping, and hide behind a tree at the roadside. At first, the summer afternoon is perfectly still—I don't hear anyone in pursuit. Birds tweet, crickets chirp. Then I see a car, slightly wavy in the humid air, seeming to roll toward me in slow motion. Manny is at the wheel, calling with feigned concern: "Lily . . . Lily . . ."

Anger renews my strength and I take off into the woods. I tear through brambles, barely notice I'm getting scratched in my haste. Counsellors can now be heard fanning out in the woods, calling, "Lily, Lily, there are bears. Lily, the bogeyman comes out at night."

I have no intention of surrender: I run deeper into the woods, toward a shadow that extends into a natural corridor. There, I find a grove, as decorous as a lounge: neatly skirted pine trees stand in a circle on a mauve carpet of soft needles. A large flat rock—a natural coffee table—sits in the center.

The stillness gives me pause: This is the enchanted forest I'd envisioned, the place Camp Ava was supposed to be. A silver brook flashes nearby, with a musical gurgle. I'll live here, I decide.

With my knowledge of Indian skills, I can build a small lean-to, subsist on berries. I find what I need—long, pole-like branches—and prop them against a tree, then pack in matted leaves and twigs. Within an hour, I have a partial shelter and am sitting there as deeper shadows fall and the night song of insects begins.

This is the time, I sense. This is the time to invoke the ultimate charm: I shut my eyes, draw up the force of my being, and beam it upward. I try a whispered call: "Rosie."

The answering silence is dense: resistance, like the humidity, is in the air. But she will come to me now; she has to. I whisper louder: "Rosie. Rosie."

I count to ten, shut my eyes, and whisper her name again.

The silence remains: a profound reply. And then, for the first time, I truly know: She will never find me. I will never see Rosie again.

Now: shouts, running steps behind my lean-to. Not my mother—Manny. I try to run again, but the breath is gone out of me. I stagger, feeling stabbed in my side, and stumble into what turns out to be a drainage ditch. I lie down there, my tears running into the mud, and above me Manny says, "Keep it up—you'll be sent to an orphanage."

He clambers down, slings me over his shoulder, and carries me to the car. I sit in the back as his prisoner and am driven into the camp.

That night, I scribble a postcard plea to my uncles: "Come get me yesterday."

I CAMP out on the basketball court, next to Susan's bunkhouse. I will never go back to the Violents, I swear. I will lie here, on this buckling asphalt, until they let me have the empty cot alongside Susan's.

The moon rises, dew forms, but I will not give in. I will sleep on the court rather than return to the older girls' bunkhouse. That afternoon, after two weeks of living in fear of just such an attack, I was stripped. The Violents, led by Toni Bloom, caught me off guard in a semiconscious state —I had slipped into a deserted cabin to be alone and fallen into my favorite reverie. I had slid down onto the floor, my back against the screen door, and let my mind wander. A warm sun had streamed upon me, lulling me deeper into the trance—I was living in the forest, with Indian warriors who had pinto ponies and a birchbark canoe—when the Violents burst in. They rammed the door, so that I fell forward onto my face, and one girl grabbed one leg, and another the other leg. They had my shorts off in seconds, and then the underpants. I twisted and kicked, anything to keep my legs together, but they pried them apart.

"She has no hairs," someone said.

And then they were gone, leaving me on the floor, too stunned to cry. Oddly enough, perhaps because so many painful events had preceded this one, I was not as devastated as I would have expected.

I made a decision: I was not going to be pushed around anymore. I marched off to Susan's bunkhouse and announced my intention of sleeping in the empty cot. Ava and Manny refused to let me go in and called my Uncle Len in the city. There was soon a major confrontation on the basketball court.

BOY'S LIFE

Napping pretzeled in plain old coach class,
we shifted so easily, the others and I, against

discomfort that when the smoking engine, snaking
through honey-thick sunlight ahead, braked

in its path, not one of us rose from reverie,
conjuring a world ached for and awaiting us by the sea.

Our journey paused, we abandoned the dusty cars,
treading down a scarp of weeds, intrepid as Margaret,

who cut her way out of a dragon with a tiny cross,
into a field darned with thistle blossoms.

The apparition of our train, sunheaded and sprawled
in the grass, a silver serpent dwelling in the glare,

numbed me strangely with a knowledge imparted there:
it was a view of man apart from the world,

grumbling that the shirt of feeling we all wear,
like an angel's gilded wings,

was not the self in the glass or even real.
Somersaulting across the landscape,

I felt my heart grow colder in those moments.
Then the violet cloud tapered and was gone.

The roadman was still greasing his brakes
when we boarded, and the rails awakened

from oblivion into their harsh grip of a globe
where somewhere by the sea I would yet come to know

what I'd seen and heard. Our train gasped onward,
summer heaping its green upon us, and my legs burned

into the leather cushions, their tawny pigment seeming
more the armored plate of a tortoise, its gleam

of yellow diamonds flashing beneath me as we were carried
to a shore whose metallic surf would pitch us without sparing.

—HENRI COLE

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Manny, Ava, and a half-dozen other counsellors circled me.

“She’ll give in,” Ava said. “In the meantime, let her sit here until she freezes her tushy off.”

Uncle Len arrives by taxi. By now, the rind of a crescent moon has risen and backlights Len as he stalks toward us—a giant figure, costumed, as usual, in trenchcoat and fedora and walking heavily on size-13 shoes. His shadow looms across the lawn. In reality, he is six feet six; in this light, he appears at least nine feet tall.

He carries a leather portfolio and a manila envelope; he enters the arena as if approaching the bench. His soft voice is weighted with even more emphasis than usual, and he speaks formally, as always—of “an altercation” and the “possibility of negotiation.”

The basic dispute is outlined for him. I must stay with Susan, I say, and the Manny/Ava team tells him I have to stay in my assigned bunk. If they break the rules for me, all the other campers will want the same thing.

Uncle Len leads Manny and Ava a short distance from where I sit, cross-legged, in center court. They confer under the hoop. “I must remonstrate with you,” he says. “We are talking about a child who lost her mother two weeks ago. She needs to be with the friend who is most familiar to her. Can’t you make an exception in this case?”

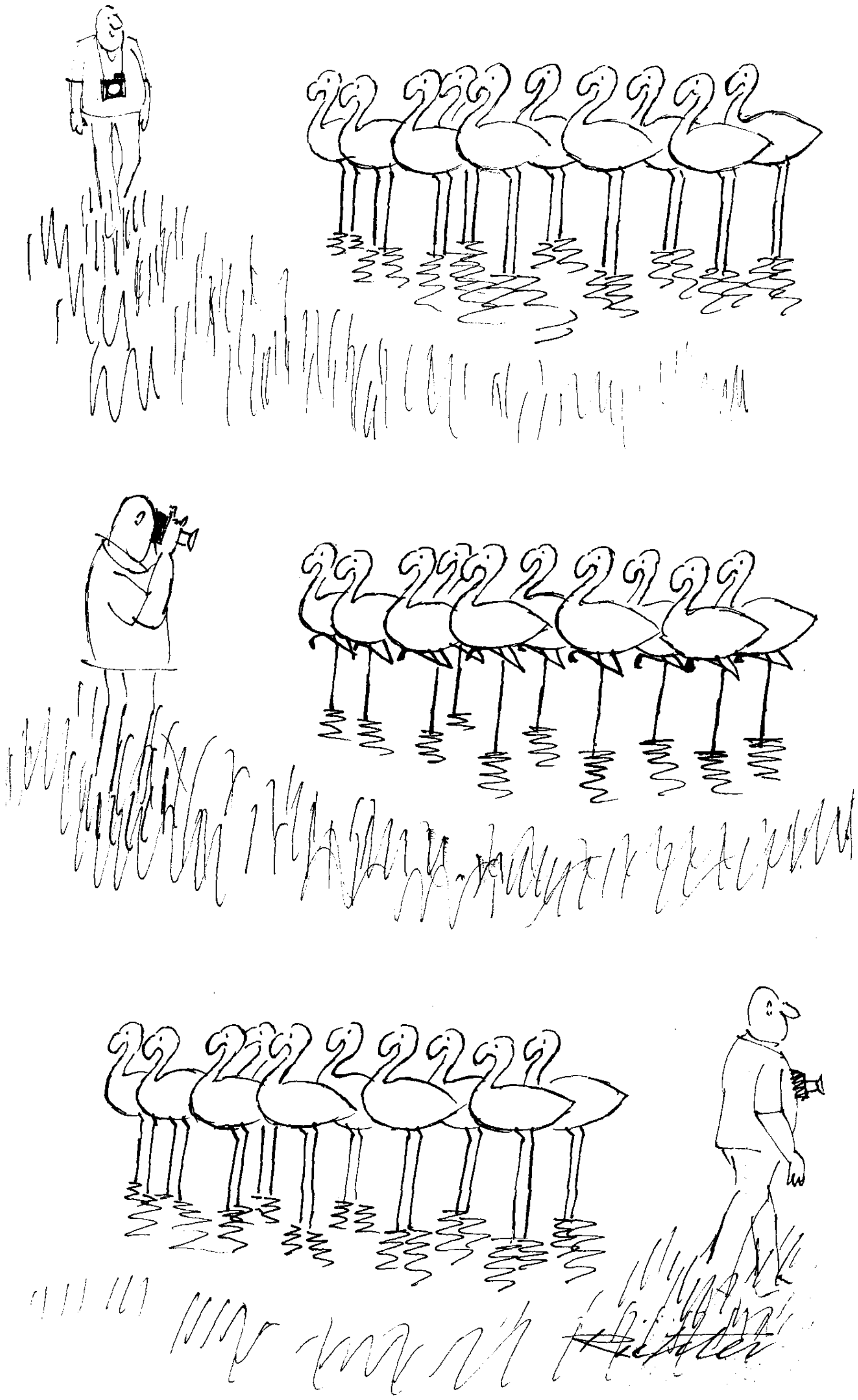
No. They can’t. Voices are raised. In the Dandelion bunk, faces, including Susan’s, appear framed in the windows.

Len says he must “caution” Manny and Ava. He doesn’t like raised voices. His own voice remains grave, low, in his usual Presidential style: “We are gathered here tonight on this field . . .” He makes a few attempts at détente. He offers his favorite recipe for any problem—further deliberation. He will call another cab and check into a hotel. Then everyone can “reconsider” the situation in the morning.

I lie down on the asphalt: No, I’m not moving.

Ava says I can hold “office” in the Violents’ bunk, I can be a vice-president, if I go back.

No. I’m insulted by this change in tactics, now that my uncle is here. I say, “Don’t use child psychology on me.” Only I can’t pronounce “psychology.”



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Uncle Len tries to reason with Manny and Ava: “Reconsider—you’re adults. This is a little girl. Let her go in there.” But Manny and Ava announce a stalemate, and they retire to their own bungalows. Len calls out after them, “This action is ill-advised and will have serious repercussions.”

I don’t know what “repercussions” are, but I like the sound of them. And I’m not budging, although it is getting colder, and I’m starting to shiver. Uncle Len takes off his trenchcoat and covers me. Then, to my surprise, he lies down on the court, too. “They’re a tough bunch,” he confides, “but we can prevail.” Like a boxing fan after watching a good match, Len compliments my “spirit.” Reliving the exchanges, Len quotes my retorts, and, for the first time, we laugh together.

As the moon and stars brighten in the night sky, our talk turns otherworldly. Len points out the constellations, and we discuss eternity, immortality, our place in this universe. This is my first real look at all the stars—back home, the city light bleached out the heavens. At night, even when my mother and I stood on the rooftop of AnaMor Towers, all we could see was Venus and the violet glow cast by the twi-night doubleheaders at Yankee Stadium.

Seeing the "big picture" opens up more possibilities. For the first time, I ask if it's possible that when people die they don't really die but go to live on other planets. Is it possible that parallel planets exist, where our missing people live their lives "exactly the same"? I am imagining my mother, on Mars, with a duplicate daughter.

Uncle Len sounds faintly dubious but doesn't dismiss the theory. "It's possible," he says. Then he and I explore more possibilities for an afterlife. We share a certain skepticism regarding Heaven. I have to ask: If *there is such a place, doesn't it get* overcrowded? And what would someone like Manny or Mrs. Hassan do there? It's hard to picture them, yelling and cleaning.

"They're concerned with trivia," Uncle Len says. (This turns out to be his favorite assessment of people he "deals with" on the "petty" problems *they "invent."*) We decide that if there is an afterlife, it's not for everyone. Only a few people have souls. Lives concerned only with "material things" end, but if people live for ideas and feelings they may exist forever.

I want to know why so many people are cruel. "There's no why," answers Uncle Len. Most people on the outside don't care, he says, and their indifference seems to be a kind of cruelty. They can behave badly, or simply disappear from your life. "Most things happen without reason," Len sums up. "Life is often a motiveless crime."

I am pondering this concept, so different from the "God will punish you" ethic of AnaMor Towers and Camp Ava, when Manny, in bathrobe and slippers, comes flapping back to the basketball court. Uncle Len rises, his eyes seemingly on a level with the hoop, and towers over the squat Manny. Manny seems to diminish in defeat, growing shorter by the second. Uncle Len says in his softest but somehow most threatening tone, "I'm taking Lily in there now."

Manny scrunches his face into submission but is still ungracious. "Do what you want, we don't need no lawsuit if you catch pneumonia out here."

"That's very wise," says Uncle Len, escorting me to the plank steps of Dandelion House. We open the door: the ten-year-old girls are stretched out in a long gray line of lumped forms. I take my place among them and prepare for my first rest since my mother's death. In her sleep, Susan makes some small sound of acknowledgment. I climb onto my bed and, before settling down, peek out the window. Uncle Len, waving his fedora, is walking backward, across the court.

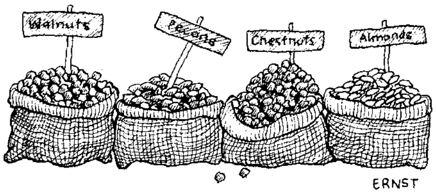
THE basketball-court victory is the high point of my torture vacation. I stagger onward, committed to the season, and to staying with Susan. I endure the remaining weeks by escaping into the camp's single interesting geological feature—an Indian cave. While the other campers commit crimes or "participate" in "activities," I hide out in the cave, where I am soon joined by a twelve-year-old boy, Frankie, who for unknown reasons has also failed to "fit in" at Camp Ava.

The cave is the sanctuary I have sought. A counsellor tells me that it was *once* occupied by Mohawk Indians, and that Ava "discovered" the place and found a pile of ancient beads that turned to powder at her touch.

Frankie, a handsome boy with bright, believing eyes and long legs, is more than willing to enact my Indian scenarios. We come close to the scenes I have always imagined at bedtime: I nurse the wounded warrior back to health. Both Frankie and I are covered with cuts and bruises, and we spend hours attending to our wounds, giving them clinical care, and charting every color change.

I immediately fall in love with Frankie, and he wants to spend all his free time with me. "You're not like the other girls," he says. We never kiss or touch—other than to peel off Band-Aids—but, sure enough, Frankie is soon accused of wrongdoing. Ava banishes him to the outskirts of camp: he is not allowed to play with me.

From then on, I count the days.



MY uncles have hinted there will be a surprise waiting for me at home. When I return from camp, Uncle Len is standing outside the building. He holds a bakery blueberry pie in his hands. We ride the elevator to a top-floor junior four, where Uncle Gabe is waiting on a freshly shellacked floor. "Welcome," Gabe says at the door, "to the O.B. Ranch."

They have waited for me to advise them on the decoration. That very afternoon, I choose from color paint chips: our apartment will be pink. My bedroom will have a special treatment: candy stripes.

"Very stylish," my uncles agree.

We travel by bus to buy floor-sample furniture that can be delivered before nightfall. As a family, we stand out at Bedland. I race up and down the aisles of beds, jumping from mattress to mattress. If one feels right, I curl into a fetal position. The salesclerks can't believe my uncles let me do this. Len and Gabe show serious respect. "How does it feel, Lily? Is that the one?"

I choose: a little-girl-size twin bed for myself, a giant bed for Uncle Len, which we immediately dub "the aircraft carrier," and a convertible sofa for Gabe.

That night we set up the permanent arrangements, although for all the nights to come we will maintain a somewhat transient style: we often wander, swathed in blankets, from room to room. Everyone goes to bed at a reasonable hour—officially—but later rises to roam around at odd intervals; ours is a nocturnal household.

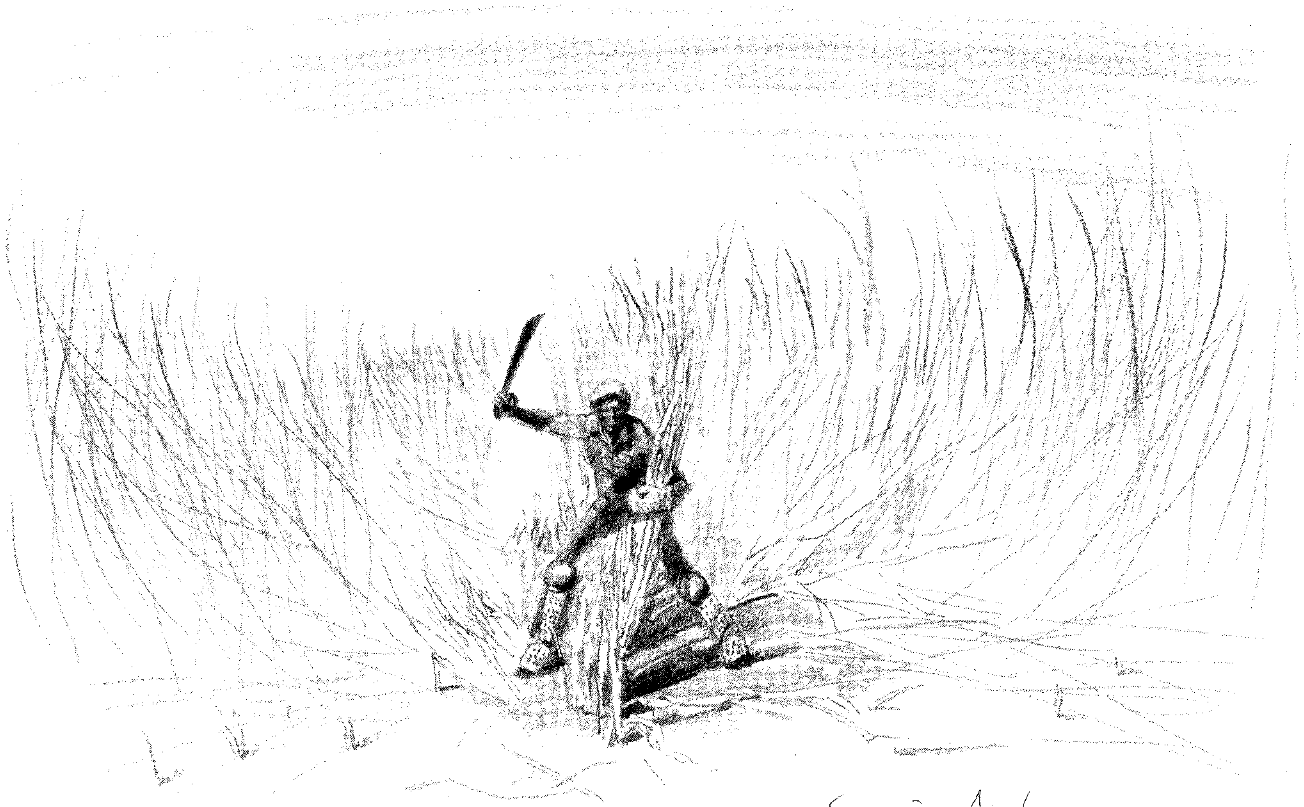
Sometimes we go to the kitchen or the bathroom and pass each other like ghosts in the dark hall. This is the time we sometimes exchange whispered confidences. There are other sounds, too—the quick slap-slap of someone's slippers, mysterious shufflings, and sometimes an unexplained moan or call to God.

But there always comes a time when the household is truly at peace—sometime before dawn, after the final excursion. This is a time when I alone am awake. My uncles are asleep, and their breathing seems to warm the night air. It is safe once more to dream.

—LAURA CUNNINGHAM

A REPORTER AT LARGE

BIG SUGAR—I



THE most perilous work in America is the harvest by hand of sugarcane in south Florida. It is performed by men from the West Indies who live in barracks on the sugar plantations. The majority come from Jamaica, but they also come from Barbados, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Dominica. The white people call them offshore workers, or offshores, or H-2 workers (after the government program overseeing their use), or H-2s, or hand cutters, or cutters, or simply, and most often, Jamaicans. As a rule, they are tall and long-limbed. They walk like dancers, and they have a taut, steely look to their arms and backs and shoulders and legs, as if they were made from wires and pulleys, as if they were designed for the task. The harvest begins in the fall and ends in the spring. Ten thousand cutters take part; they constitute the largest single group of foreign workers admitted each year to this country. Often they spend as much time abroad as at home. Their quarters are cheerless and without any privacy, the food they are served is not to their liking, they are frequently cheated by their employers, and they are constantly tormented by loneliness and by anxiety over the lives their wives and girlfriends and families and friends are living without them at home. In the fields, they wear aluminum guards on their hands, their shins, and their knees, as well as heavy boots on their feet. Even so, more than one in every three of them cuts himself or is cut by someone who has lost control of his knife, or wrenches his back, or suffers an attack of some kind in the heat, or steps in a rabbit hole and turns an ankle, or is bitten by fire ants, or pierces an eye or an eardrum with a sharp leaf of cane while bending over and grabbing a stalk. If the last is the case and you ask him what happened, he is likely to say, "I spear up in a cane top."

Sugarcane is grown on the south shore of Lake Okeechobee, the body of water depicted on the Florida license plate. A singular quality of the area's soil—it is unusually soft—makes harvesting the crop by machine problematic; mechanical harvesters often bog down and tear up the fields and pull the cane from the soil by the roots. Sugarcane returns each year from previous plantings, like grass—a field customarily supplies five crops before being replanted—so it is important that the roots not be damaged. A third of the crop is harvested mechanically. Machines are used mainly in fields where the soil is more substantial. In addition to being dangerous, cutting sugarcane is monotonous and fatiguing. It is stoop labor. The cutters perform the bulk of their task bent over at the waist; to stand upright, they often brace themselves with one hand on the lower back and rise slowly. What they are paid is determined by means of a piece rate calculated on the assumption that they will cut at least a ton of sugarcane an hour. The growers assign a price, called a row price, to a cut row of cane, a cut row being two side-by-side rows. Rows are either a quarter of a mile or half a mile long, depending on the dimensions of the field. Because of the danger and the tedium and the piece rate, Americans have shunned work in cane. In the annals of Florida agriculture, the profitable cultivation of sugarcane is a recent event; it was first grown with significant commercial success in 1931

"Mrs. Leffler threw burned toast out the window and hit Mr. Stripes on the head. I think Mrs. Leffler owes Mr. Stripes an apology. What do you think about that, Elinor honey?"

• •

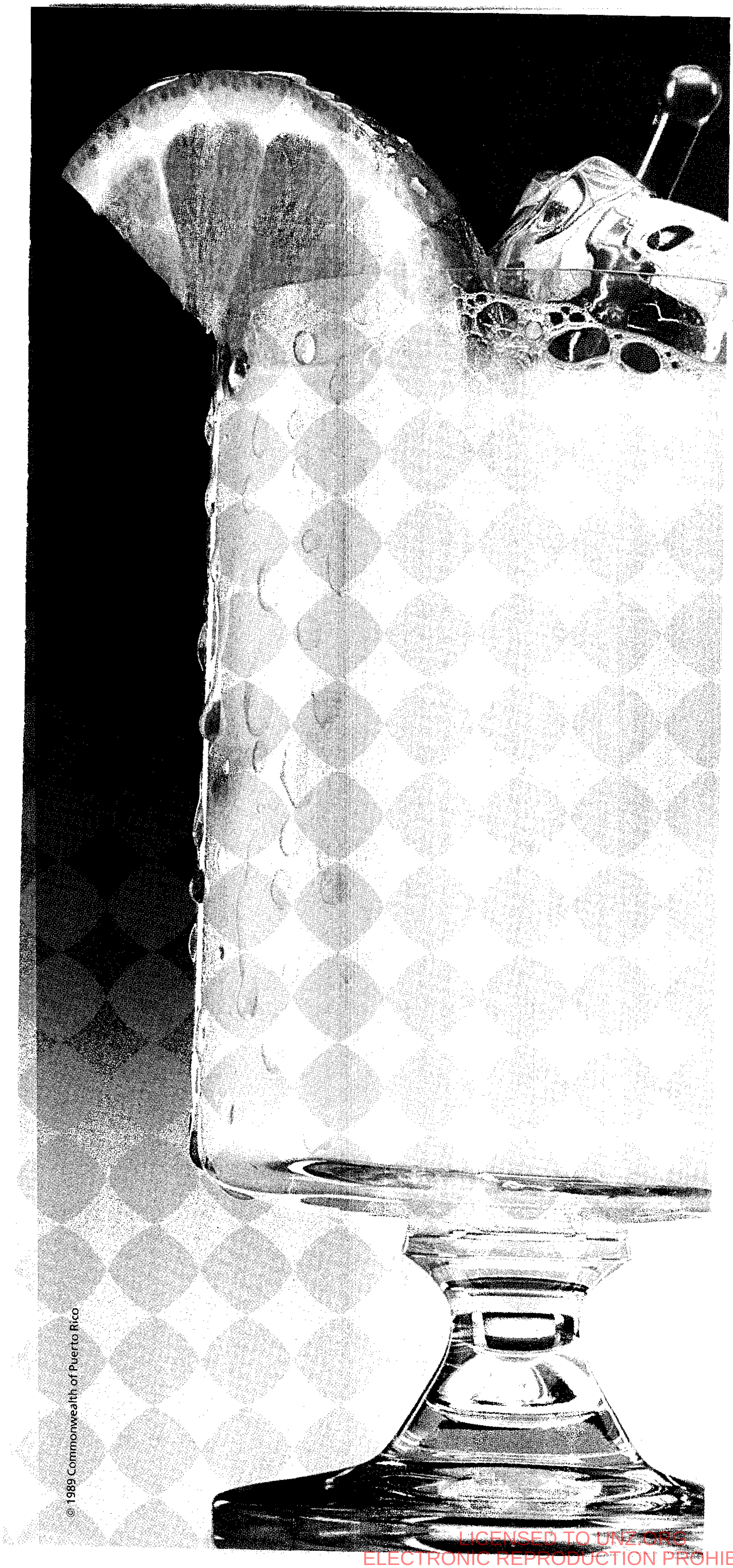
by the United States Sugar Corporation. For the next eleven years, the crop was harvested by black men recruited throughout the South. White men would travel on behalf of the corporation to cities like Memphis and Tuscaloosa and walk through the black part of town offering free transportation and medical care and housing and meals to anyone who would cut sugarcane in Florida, and when the workers arrived they would hear that they owed the corporation for the ride and for the equipment to cut cane and that they couldn't leave the plantation until they had satisfied their debts. To find sufficient sources of labor, representatives of the corporation had to keep travelling farther from south Florida, to places where word of their practices had not yet arrived. In the early nineteen-forties, they began to find that men who might otherwise have cut sugarcane had moved north to jobs in factories or were abroad in the war. West Indians have cut the sugarcane crop in south Florida for more than forty-five years. They appeared in the fields in the fall of 1943, a year after the United States Sugar Corporation, which then held eighty-six per cent of the acreage, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Tampa for carrying out a conspiracy to commit slavery.

Sugarcane is grown also in Texas, Louisiana, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. The Florida crop, as well as being the only one that is harvested by hand, is by far the largest, accounting for more than forty per cent of all the sugarcane grown in America. There are plantings of significance in Martin and Glades Counties, but most of the acreage, as well as all seven of the mills, lies within Hendry and Palm Beach Counties, in fields outside the towns of Pahokee, Belle Glade, South Bay, Clewiston, and Moore Haven. The first to be planted were the fields outside Clewiston, the home of U.S. Sugar.

The way the West Indians pronounce Clewiston suggests a place cooled by breezes from the sea. It is not. It is a small, lonesome, dreary, and prosperous company town, sixty miles west of Palm Beach. It has almost six thousand inhabitants. It was built in the nineteen-twenties according to plans drawn up in Boston by a firm working for the Southern Sugar Corporation, which wanted a showcase town for its headquarters. (Southern Sugar went bankrupt in 1930; in 1931, U.S. Sugar was created to take over its assets.) A promotional booklet, published in the nineteen-forties by U.S. Sugar, describes Clewiston as "one of the few custom, or tailor-made cities, developed along preconceived plans." From above, the design of the town resembles two narrow tombstones laid side by side, heads against the lake. The streets run mainly on the grid; a few, by the lake, describe arcs. One way to think of Clewiston is as an interruption of the cane. Route 27 leaves the fields and passes through the center of town; it is the main street, and is called the Sugarland Highway. It has five stoplights. The street lamps along it line up as straight as the lights on a runway. At one end of town is a sign saying "Welcome to Clewiston, America's Sweetest Town." At the other is a stand of bamboo beside a canal leading into the lake. Big, haughty stick-legged herons roost in the bamboo trees like figures on a Chinese scroll.

The most prominent building in town is the mill, called the Sugar House, which begins running in the fall and runs around the clock until spring. The majority of the town's black population live beside the mill, in a neighborhood called Harlem. The tallest buildings in Harlem are the churches—the Church of God, the Tabernacle of Witness Deliverance, and the Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. In the evening, the streets are full of children. Many have West Indian blood and are exceptionally handsome. The people of Harlem live with the constant sound of the mill. The houses closest to it lie just across a canal from the company land. Periodically, when conditions are right at the mill, and the wind is blowing from the east, the mill disperses over Harlem a stench like that of raw sewage.

The cane fields lie on three sides of the town, the lake on the fourth. From the top of the levee by the lake, the fields have the broad, uniform, slightly-swaying-in-the-wind look of a prairie. Sugarcane is a cast-iron crop: it survives episodes of freezing and flooding; it survives fire; in Florida it has few pests and few diseases, and its water supply, based on a series of canals



RUM BEATS VODKA TO A PULP.

We beat 'em, and we beat 'em at their best. We went to vodka's home field, their top ten markets. Then we went up against their number one selling vodka in a blind taste test.

The results were decisive. The smooth taste of Puerto Rican rum and o.j. was preferred substantially over the traditional vodka screwdriver.

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RUMS
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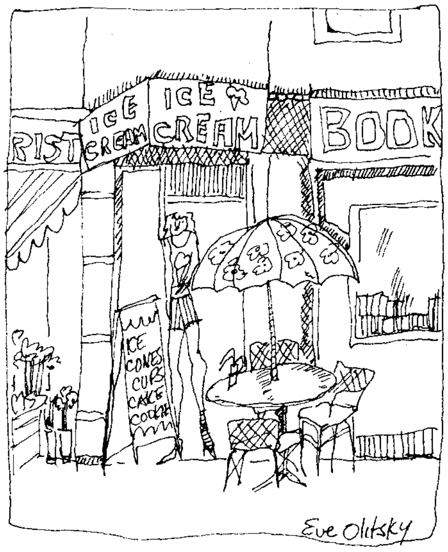
fed by the lake, is all but invulnerable to drought; and its value is protected by arrangements with the government. So fields of it have the pleasing, stable look of a sound investment; they look like money in the bank. The fields run to the horizon. Sugarcane is a row crop, and the arrangement, over so many miles, of rows and grids and blocks gives the fields an appearance as orderly and patterned and precise as a design on a piece of fabric. A person riding in a car on the highway or on one of the paved roads winding through the fields, all of which lie on beds built up from the soil, looks out his window across vistas that are wide and deep and as flat as a body of water. The sky falls to the horizon like a curtain; the fields of cane, the taller woods by the lake, and the sky, foreshortened by the eye, appear to lie on top of each other, like layers of geology. The fields absorb the heat of the sun and send it back toward the sky in shimmers. For the most part, the fields are without variation, so any change—a cypress head, the stacks of a mill, a silo for cattle feed—looms like a destination. The sky is so large that several kinds of weather sometimes take place in it at once.

Across all this distance a person occasionally sees a small flash, like someone sending a signal with a mirror, like a distress call, like a little chip of mica catching the light, and that is the sun striking the blade of the cane knife as the cutter raises it above his shoulder and brings it down toward the field. If the person wanted to establish the source of the light and went closer to the field, he would begin to discern the colors of the cutters' clothes, then the human forms; closer still, he would begin to hear the faint, thudding sound of the blades; then, closer still, the voice of the pusher, the man who oversees the cutters at work: "Watch them leaves, cut the top them off, pile that cane good, I ain't joking, now."

I WENT to Clewiston for the first time in 1984, because it had appeared as the dateline on a newspaper article I read about the sugar business, and over the next four years I kept going back. Most of the time, I stayed at the Clewiston Inn, which, I learned, is owned by U.S. Sugar. At the front desk, they sell windbreakers and polo shirts bearing the company logo. When there were no rooms—when the inn was expecting a delegation to the industry from Washington which had booked the whole place, or when there was a bass-fishing tournament going on at the lake—I stayed in one of the cement-block motels along the highway, where the car and truck headlights penetrated the curtains and threw shadows all night on the walls and the ceiling, where I was the only person without a boat on a trailer parked outside my door, and where when I got up in the morning my car was the only one left in the lot. At night, I would have a steak and two beers at Tony's Glades Restaurant and drive out to the camp at Moore Haven, to look at the cutters from the highway. Or I went to Donnelly's, at the east end of town, where the light was better and I could read if I wanted to. Saturday nights at Donnelly's, I became accustomed to the sight of big fat men who had come into some town hauling a bass boat and had launched it at dawn at the marina and fished all day and then gone into a restaurant and ordered highballs and raised their glasses to one another's sunburned faces and said, "Here's to a great weekend," and then, worn out from the day on the water, had eaten in silence, except maybe to say, "How's your steak, buddy? I got a great piece of meat!" One night in Donnelly's, I saw the best-looking woman I had seen in my years in Clewiston sitting by herself at a table and reading the local paper, and finally a man at a table nearby finished his steak and turned to her and said, "So what's new today?" and she looked up from the paper and said "Went hog hunting" and he nodded and she went back to reading. There were always lots of silences. One night, I sat next to a family having dinner, and I heard the oldest child, a teen-age girl, tell her parents, "If you think I'm spending the rest of my life in Clewiston, you've been dreaming too much."



While I was in Clewiston, the Lakeport volunteer firemen held a pancake breakfast. Sheriff Dyess cut the ribbon on the new Hendry County Jail in La Belle. (Several of the town's prominent citizens sat as prisoners in the cells while townspeople toured the facilities.) Hatfield's Mobile Home Sales advertised a 1986 Fleetwood double-wide (three bedrooms, two bathrooms, large living room, large den), furnished (including ceiling fans), and set up on a lot, for $222.23 a month. "In Our Opinion," a column in the Clewiston *News*, asked, "What do you want Santa Claus to bring you for Christmas?" to which one woman answered, "A washing machine, cause mine tore up." Two men penning cows near a cabbage hammock on the Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation discovered a crashed plane. The Tommy Smith family (Tommy, June, and Scott) was chosen Hendry County Farm Family of the Year. A sixteen-year-old boy watched his mother and father struggle over control of a semi-automatic pistol; when they broke apart, the gun fired and his mother was killed. "Christmas in Paris," the United Methodist Women's bazaar, featured "French-related items" and a robot that wished people Merry Christmas. The Association for Retarded Citizens held a car wash. A McDonald's opened. The Clewiston police asked the public's help in finding Audie Lee Hopkins, twenty-four years old, a heavy-equipment operator with shoulder-length brown hair, green eyes, and a skull and "Lee" tattooed on his left forearm, last seen driving a white 1975 two-door Ford. Sandra Holder hung "Impressions by Sandra" at the Clewiston National Bank. (Among the works was "Kief," a portrait of an Arabian horse.) "Jesus Is Lord," a play about the Crucifixion, had a run of six days at the John Boy Auditorium. Joni Busbee was crowned Miss Hendry County at the Hendry County Fair and Livestock Show. (The theme was "Honoring Hendry County's Harvest"; attendance was 19,433, second largest ever; during the talent portion of the competition Miss Busbee performed the monologue "A Phone Call from the Lord.") On the Big Cypress Reservation, members of the Seminole Tribal Housing Authority cut the ribbon on their new office. A tornado derailed eight empty cane cars and pushed twenty-eight cars half a mile east. The Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church turned fifty-nine and, together with the Clewiston Pentecostal Holiness Church, held a revival with the Reverend Billy Thompson in a big tent out by the highway. The Hendry County Sheriff's Department offered "Women's Firearm Training and Safety." The Florida Division of Plant Industry announced that it was selling fire-ant bait. A man was arrested for trespassing on fenced pasture. The high-school football team went to the quarter-finals of the state championship. (The week before the game, the cheerleaders painted "TIGERS ARE #1" in blue and yellow on the windows of the stores along the Sugarland Highway; late Saturday afternoon, they washed it off.) Letters in the *News* appeared under the headlines "AMERICA'S SAFEST TOWN," "HEAD LICE CONCERN," "MINISTER SAYS MERCHANTS CAN DEFINE PORNOGRAPHY," and "TAX PEEVES CITIZEN."

THE cutters live in camps maintained by the growers. Some are near towns (one is right in Belle Glade), and some are in the fields. A few are beside the mills. Some are surrounded by chain-link fences, a number have checkpoints, and all are off limits to outsiders. At the smallest camps live perhaps a hundred and fifty cutters, at the largest ones two thousand. How many are permitted to live in a barracks is determined by a government regulation concerning the minimum space to which a cutter is entitled.

There are twenty-one camps, divided into approximately equal numbers of two kinds: villages consisting of one-room cottages, and buildings that hold numbers of cutters. The villages are the older design. They were built on sites chosen because they were central to the fields their cutters were to harvest. Each camp was responsible for three to four thousand acres. In times past, the villages often included a chapel and a commissary, and occasionally a school. Perhaps half of the men who worked on the harvest lived year round in the camps and had families. The men planted cane and cultivated the fields and kept up the farm roads and ditches. Most of the cottages are made of concrete and finished with stucco. They have concrete floors. Some are of a material called Homasote and sit on stilts. Most have a porch by the front door and a sink where the men can wash their clothes and the sap from their knives.

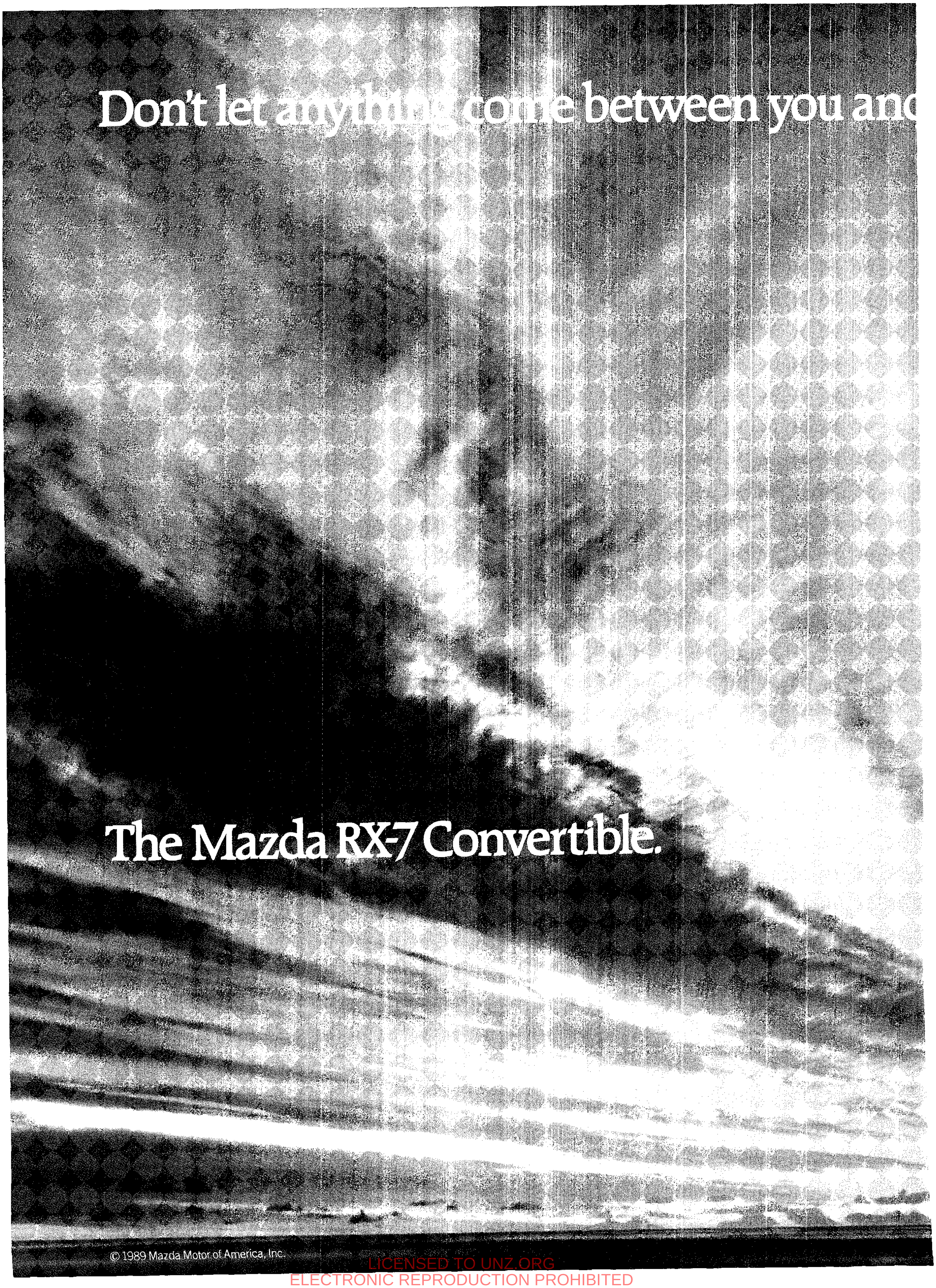
The majority of the larger barracks are built of concrete from the simplest plans. They are flat-roofed and have two or three stories; they look like shoeboxes. Usually they are painted tan. A number are in disrepair. Some look like slums. Often, there is trash in the yard. Occasionally, it is raked into piles and set on fire. Dogs and chickens scavenge the ashes. Shade is unusual. The roofs take the full heat of the sky. The floors are divided into large open rooms. Within them the air is still. Heat collects. No provisions have been made for relieving the heat or for moving the air. In town, the cutters buy fans that run on batteries and place them beside their beds. Sanitation is lax. The cutters sometimes question the purity of the water. Stalls in the bathroom have no doors. There is noise and smoke. The buildings have been allowed to dilapidate. On their own against the landscape, they appear stolid and dismal and formal and severe, like a place a person might end up only by means of bad luck. They look like something you would expect to see out near the airport in a country with a tropical climate and a faltering currency. The Jamaicans think they look like big boats moored in the fields. At night, with their rows of windows white against the darkness, they have the slightly metallic, incandescent look of a liner.

The cutters sleep in bunk beds lined up in rows, heads to the wall, with an aisle down the middle of the room. Beside each bed is room enough for a man to stand and pull on his pants. Each bed has a gray wool blanket. The cutters are given sheets, which are exchanged every two weeks. The cutters prefer the lower bunks. You can drape a sheet or a towel from the top like a curtain and have privacy, and also block out some of the light, which comes from the ceiling and is harsh. Also, the heat rises, and so do the smells. Lying in bed at night, the cutters can feel the heat settling on them. In some camps, lockers stand between the beds; in others, they are set at the ends of the room. The men play cards across the beds, or checkers; they draw checkerboards on the sides of cardboard boxes and use bottle caps for pieces. At the head of many of the top bunks are windows. As the darkness fills the windows, they turn shiny and reflective, and eventually what the cutters see as they lie there looking out at the fields is their faces staring back at them.

Some of the bunks are empty, vacated by cutters who have slipped the contract. In a prosperous year, the empty beds are piled with suitcases the cutters buy in town and fill with women's dresses and children's clothes and paper towels and cans of cocktail nuts to take back to the islands. In a bad year, a boss man's year, the beds just stay empty.

A few camps have washing machines. Most have only sinks. To clean their work clothes, the cutters pour powdered detergent on them and scrub them as if they were washing their clothes in a river. Some camps have dryers. If there is no clothesline in the yard, the cutters weave the sleeves of their shirts through the links of the fences or wrap them around the railings of the balconies. Flapping in the wind, the shirts and trousers look festive. They give the camp a carnival air. They make it look as if the buildings had been put up for some other purpose and abandoned and taken over by squatters. At camps without fences or balconies, cutters string up clotheslines inside the barracks. Whether they wash their clothes on any given day has to do with how tired they are when they return from the fields. If they haven't got the energy to wash them, they hang them on the lines to dry anyway. This disheartens the camp generally, because of the smell, and because it forces the cutters to live constantly amid the dirt of the fields. It gets into their beds and their hair and their stores of food.

From the water pipes above their beds the cutters hang the dress clothes they arrived in. Men who have had the experience of a season know to bring extra clothes, so they can date. They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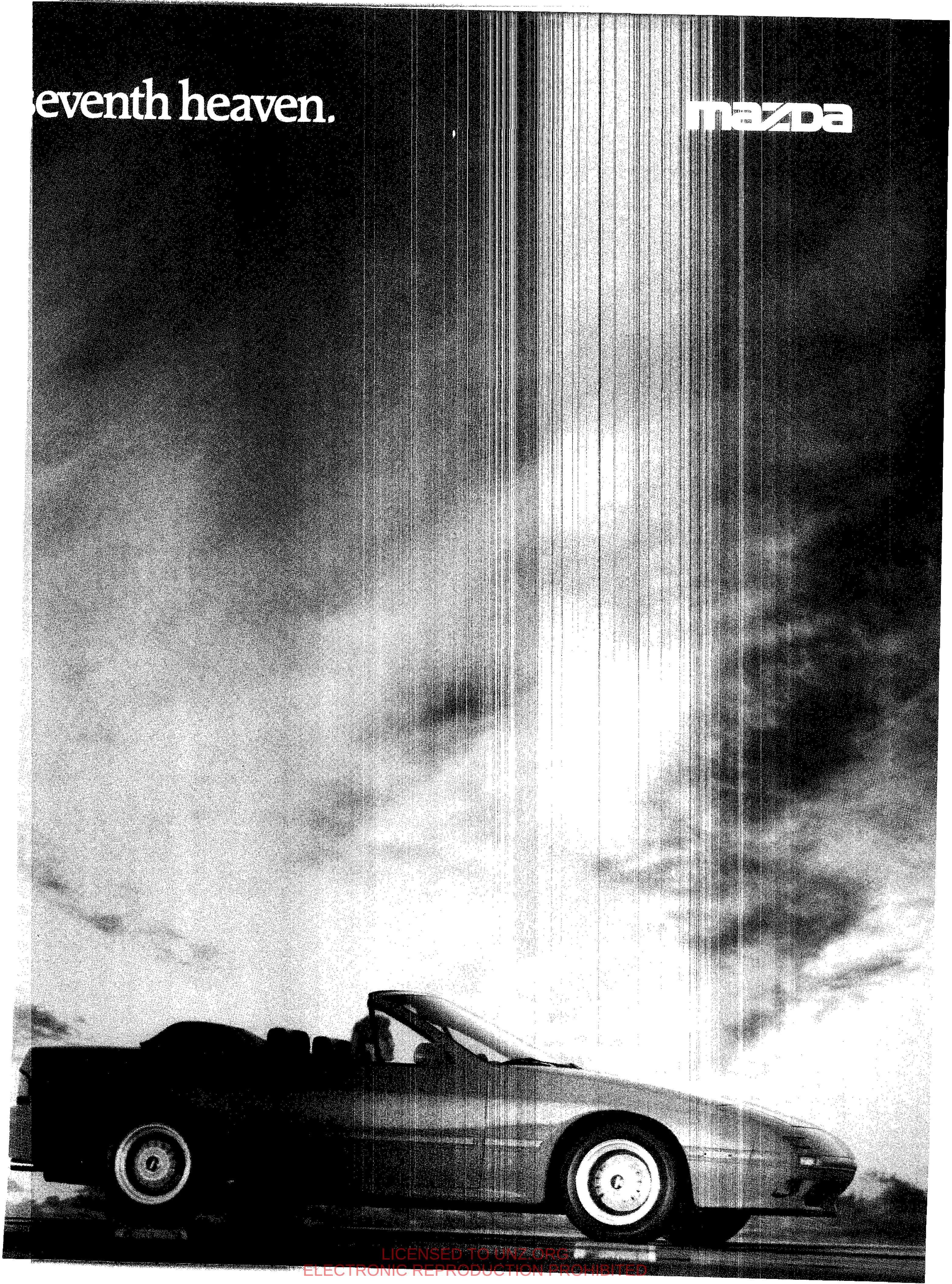
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cannot easily get their clothes to the cleaners; toward the end of the season, in dressing for town the cutters freshen up their shirts by spraying them with deodorant.

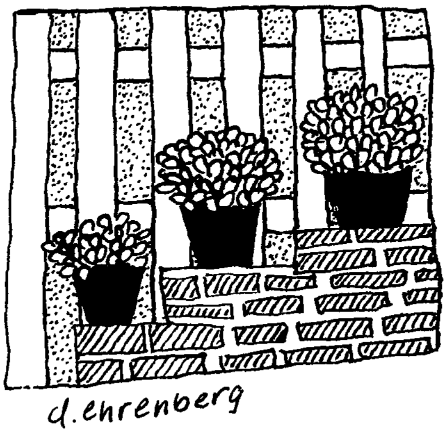
A cutter will come in from the fields and remove his shirt and sit in a chair and not move. You note his presence. You leave. You return. He has remained where he was, without moving. Or one might lie on the bed and throw his arm over his eyes to keep out the light and fall asleep immediately. (Often, you see a man asleep with his head beside a tape player turned up loud, or by a television screen, the blue light playing across his face.) Or one might sit and unwrap the bindings he wears to brace his wrist so slowly that he reminds you of a man removing bandages from a wound. Sometimes a cutter you know looks at you out of eyes that show the effort of trying to think who you are, of returning from where he is in his mind to greet you. As you pass between the rows of bunks, the cutters observe you with eyes that look like the eyes of men who are fighting a disease.

The camps in the countryside, among the fields, are remote from any amusement. At night, the cutters who have revived can stand in the darkness and look out at the glows thrown up on the horizon by the distant towns. They call the West Indies from pay phones in the yards. They wander out among the fields. They fish in the canals. They play cooncan, peter pot, rummy, and poker. They sit at card tables under signs that say "Gambling Will Not Be Permitted at Any Time" and raise their hands above their heads and slap down dominoes with such force that the tables shake. They sit on the edge of their beds and listen to a preacher on the radio tell them that their lives are steeped in sin and that mansions await them in Heaven, or watch professional wrestling or a martial-arts movie, or go off to a corner, so as not to disturb the others, and file the blades of their knives or shave the handles to fit their palms. They receive peddlers. Women visit; they bring a blanket and roll it out at the edge of the fields. Or work in their cars. The men ask the rate and how much time they will have, and the women tell them, "As long as it stay."

The cutters cook on hot plates they are permitted to have only for making coffee and tea. To conceal the hot plates, they put them in cardboard boxes by the side of their beds and cover the pots with the flaps of the box and make soup or fry fish. Steam rises from the boxes, misting the windows. When a number of men are cooking, it is sometimes not possible to see through the smoke and the steam from one end of a barracks to the other. What they make mostly is soup with thick dumplings called spinners. At one camp, a cook planted cassava beside one of the barracks; the cutters go out and collect it and add it to their soups. In the fields, the cutters get braised oxtails, or pigs' feet, or beef stew, as well as rice and red beans, and maybe turnip greens or mustard greens. The food is not even close to their liking. They feel that it hasn't got the ingredients to give them strength. It is too starchy and bland and greasy a diet for a man who spends all day laboring in a cane field.

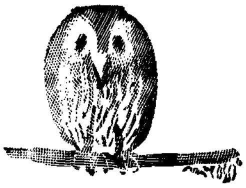
To supplement the food they are served, the cutters make a drink from a base of eggnog, sugar, and Guinness stout. To this they add some combination of carrot juice, milk, V8, nutmeg, a beaten egg, evaporated milk, and Nutrament. Jamaicans call this drink petrol. Barbadians call it shandy; sometimes they leave out the eggnog. Grocery stores in Clewiston and Belle Glade and Pahokee sell the ingredients in displays. Many cutters feel that it takes too long to eat the meal they are served in the fields; they fear that in the time they are away from their row the work will be assigned to somebody else. Instead, they fill the drink jugs they are given with petrol and bring them to the fields for lunch. In the evening, they drink large glasses of petrol with the meals they make for themselves; some men like then to add a little brandy to the mixture.

Most cutters prefer the larger camps, even though the food and the pay are not as good as at the smaller camps and there are also the aggravations of heat and crowding and lack of cleanliness. They like the larger camps because there is more activity. The camp in Belle Glade is close to a number of bars. The problem living there is getting enough sleep to be fit for work in the morning. The cutters are in and out of the bars all night, spending their money and drinking beer and dancing. Since they are handsome, they are popular with the local women, who also like their accents. The bars are small and as dark as caves. It is hard to make out faces. Mainly, the bars feature reggae. Conversation is impossible. You go out the swinging screen door of the barracks and down the stairs and turn left on the street and walk to the end of the block and you are in the pleasure district of Belle Glade.



A PECULIARITY of the harvest is the burning of the fields the day before cutting. The fires are spectacular. They consume the leaves and the tops, which slow down the cutters and clog the mill, and they clear the fields of wildlife. They take place late in the morning or early in the afternoon. As your eyes circle the horizon, you can often find more than one fire. In the distance, they look like disasters, like air strikes, like war. White smoke means that the field is damp, and is burning poorly. Black is ideal. The dark, rising columns put the fields in shadow. What light filters through is unnatural, like the light before a storm, except that it is not green, it is orange, or amber, like the light from a stoplight; it makes a person look as if he were blushing. The fires make a furnace of the fields. Currents of heat spin like whirlpools in the air above the flames. At a certain distance, you can feel the heat through the closed windows of a car. In the vicinity of the burn, the air smells like roasted corn. (Sugarcane and corn are related.) Occasionally, you can detect the smell on the wind in town. Sometimes you can see ash from the fields drifting in the air before you on Main Street. The fires make a terrific amount of noise. A man I know who woke as a child to the bombing of Pearl Harbor went back to sleep thinking, It is only the burning of the cane fields. On the hottest burns there is a thick, oily look to the smoke and the flames. The egrets fly in and out of the fires, rising and falling on the hot churning air.

Prudent burners take several precautions. Burning one of two bordering fields, they wet the edge of one or the other, usually the one being burned, to prevent the flames from jumping. Or run a tractor down two or three rows at the border and burn them against the wind, creating a firebreak. Down any rows beneath power lines or near houses they also run tractors, to keep the flames low to the ground. Some growers send a tractor down the outside row of any field they burn, in order to make a path for the man lighting the fire and for the water wagon. Doing this cuts the profit of the field, not only for the money spent on the tractor and the driver but also because fallen cane is more expensive to harvest, and therefore many growers don't bother.



There are two methods of burning: hot and cold—with the wind, that is, and against it. On a cold burn, the fire stays closer to the ground and is easier to manage. The flames take longer to cross the field, and leave the tops of the stalks intact, but a burner is less likely to have someone trapped in the field or lose control of his fire. If the cane is damp or the burner wants to hurry up his burn or wants a fire that clears out as much trash as possible, he burns hot. What he gets is a horse race of flame across the fields. As fast as the wind will carry the fire, he can burn a hundred acres. A hundred acres burned cold might take two hours—the fire creeps against the wind. Early in the season, when the cane is green and the fires are less vigorous, growers mostly burn hot. Later, when the cane is dry, they burn cold, especially after a freeze. After a freeze, the fields burn as if gasoline had been sprayed on them. What people say is that after a freeze the fields explode.

Cold burning is also called backburning. Flyers—burning leaves that drift into other fields and set them on fire—are more likely to occur in backburned fields. The slow-moving flames ignite not only the cane but also the palmettos and cabbage palms that border the fields; their fibrous leaves, slow to catch, burn stubbornly, and, borne on the wind, they can set ablaze fields a mile away. On days of high wind, burners stand on the roofs of their trucks and scan the far fields for smoke. After a freeze, the fires sometimes jump the canals, because the weeds on the surface of the canals are dry. If a burner loses control of a fire (happens, rarely), he calls the Forest Service. A deft burner walks the fire across the field as easily as if he had it on a leash.

Burners light two or three sides of a field, depending on the direction and the force of the wind. Lighting three sides helps move the flame in low wind, because the fire draws straight up and burns stronger. The trickiest burns, the finesse burns, are those involving fields surrounded by another man's holdings. In order to collect his cane, the grower sends two men into the wind, lighting all four sides, and the flames meet in the center of the field. Some burners ignite all four sides as common practice, but most leave at least one side open for snakes and rats and rabbits and raccoons and pigs to escape. If the field being burned is one beside others, the animals disappear into the bordering field, often without being seen. If the burn involves the last block of a field, they hotfoot it across the open ground to cover. In their terror, they sometimes run straight at a person, almost arriving before they recover their senses. Sometimes, spooked, they run back into the field. Some field bosses keep rifles in their pickups to put out of their misery animals run over by the flames.

Some of the bigger growers have burn crews—men who perform other tasks on the farm but are available to carry a fire pot and know what to do with it. Smaller growers often use anyone handy. When the tractor drivers see their supervisor's truck approaching, they strive to appear deeply engaged in their work. If the supervisor happens to arrive at a moment when a crew is idle, a kind of musical-chairs activity takes place around the machines, because the drivers know he is looking for someone to send down a cane row on a sweltering day with a fire pot, dodging snakes. When you see a man in the distance walking down a ditchbank lighting a cane row and then see him drop the fire pot, or turn it away from the cane field and point its spout at the ground, and start doing a little dance, you are looking at a man

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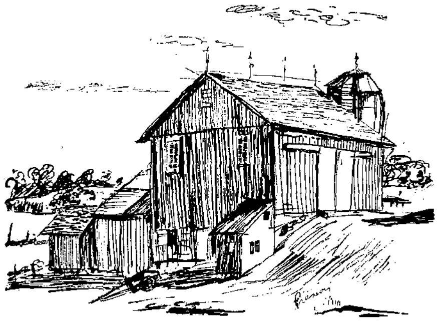
who has found a snake. Few people like to carry the fire pot. Over the quarter-mile or half-mile length of the row, it grows heavy. Unless the row has been run down by a tractor, the burner is fighting his way against the cane. The heat can be fearsome. Not only is finding a snake unsettling but the entire time the burner is messing with the snake he can hear the fire gaining behind him.

There is a technique to carrying the pot. If a person holds the pot pointed down at too steep an angle, it will leak, and he will find the pot in flames from the fuel dripping over it. Also, holding the pot at too steep an angle wastes fuel. A good burner can burn sixty acres with half a pot or two fields with one pot. Sometimes the fire pots develop cracks in their gaskets and leak and catch fire, and the only thing to do is toss them into the canal; the hotter the pot gets, the more the gasket expands, allowing more fuel to escape.

Birds are drawn in flocks to the flames. They arrive in hysterics. Grasshoppers, borne on the currents of heat, shoot like rockets from the fields. The birds read the vectors of their flight and pick them cleanly from the air. Grackles and ricebirds show up in numbers, but most of the birds are egrets. They hug the flames; they disappear into them; they settle on the fields and walk right up to the fires, as if on a dare, and are never consumed. Sometimes they get scorched. Often they get smudged with soot and ash, and come to look shabby, like vagrants. High above them, buzzards turn in slow circles, lowering themselves in passes to the carcasses of rabbits and rats run down by the flames. Sometimes, following the burning of an entire block, people from town come out to the fields and club rabbits in the weeds along the ditchbanks.

THE interests of the Florida sugarcane industry are seen to by the Florida Sugar Cane League, a trade association devoted to lobbying, research, and public relations. I had hopes of talking to a number of cutters and touring the camps. I called the league from New York City and said that I planned to come down for a few weeks and look around, and a pleasant young woman in charge of public relations said there wouldn't be much point in that. "No one ever stays more than three days," she said. "They see a movie and visit a farm and get a tour of a mill, and that's it." I said that I was particularly interested in meeting the West Indians and seeing the camps where they lived and how they spent their time after work and if it really was as hard to cut sugarcane as I'd heard, and all the warmth drained from her voice and she said, "You will never meet a cutter or visit a camp." She said that the cutters didn't like being disturbed. She asked if I had a camera and I said that I did, and she said that the cutters hated being photographed. Furthermore, she said, the growers had had it with articles highlighting conditions at the camps and the rigors of the fields and the hardships endured by the cutters. In beginning to look into the sugar business, I had collected a booklet published in the nineteen-forties by U.S. Sugar under the title "The Everglades, Agro-Industrial Empire of the South," which contained this sentence: "On both sides of the highway west from Belle Glade can be seen the South Bay Plantation of the United States Sugar Corporation, with its neat, orderly, and well maintained cottages of the happy, contented plantation workers." So I felt as if the attitude I was dealing with had a historical reference.

When I first started going to Florida, I would always check in with the league, because the people there were pleasant and helpful, and then I began to realize that it was not in my interest to do so. Whenever I called a person in the industry, he would ask if I had got clearance from the league to make the call, or say he couldn't talk without checking with the league, or say the information I wanted would have to come from the league. Then he would call the league and tell them I had got in touch with him. A woman I know called a friend who worked for one of the growers and asked if he could arrange for me to watch cutters in the fields. The league heard about it and called her up and said she had no authority to arrange an introduction for me. The person I was to have been introduced to then called my friend and said he would not meet me unless the meeting had been cleared with the league.



I had an introduction to a Haitian man in Belle Glade who worked for Florida Rural Legal Services, and he said he could spare half an hour one afternoon to take me to meet some cutters. His name was Jackson François. He said we could probably talk to a few Jamaicans, but mostly we would have to talk to Haitians, because that was who he knew; each year, a few dozen Haitians from the area find work in the harvest. We drove to the camp in the center of Belle Glade. Cutters stared at us from the balconies and stood around on the street. Laundry hung from the railings. We approached three cutters standing on the sidewalk. Jackson's greeting was jaunty. The cutters said nothing. Jackson pointed to one and, turning to me, said, "You can talk to him." I asked the man if he cut sugarcane, and he just looked at me. The cutters began taunting Jackson for appearing well-to-do. Jackson said, "You have a good job, you make more than me, we all do different jobs, sometime I can do your job and you can do mine, but you make more than me." One of them turned to me and said he wanted money to talk about sugarcane. He asked where I was from, and when I said New York City he said that I should have brought women. He said that if I wanted to talk to anyone about sugarcane I must bring money and women. Furthermore, he said, if I wanted to talk to a Jamaican I must bring a Jamaican, not a Haitian.

We walked over to some cutters leaning against a car. They studied us. Jackson pointed to one and said, "You want to talk to this man?" I said yes, and Jackson said, "You can talk to him."

I asked the man if he cut cane, and he said yes and looked away. I asked how he had started, and he said, "I don't know myself."

The man who had insisted on money came over and said, "Pay me money to talk about cutting cane." When I didn't say anything, he turned to Jackson and said, "Pay me money to tell him about cane."

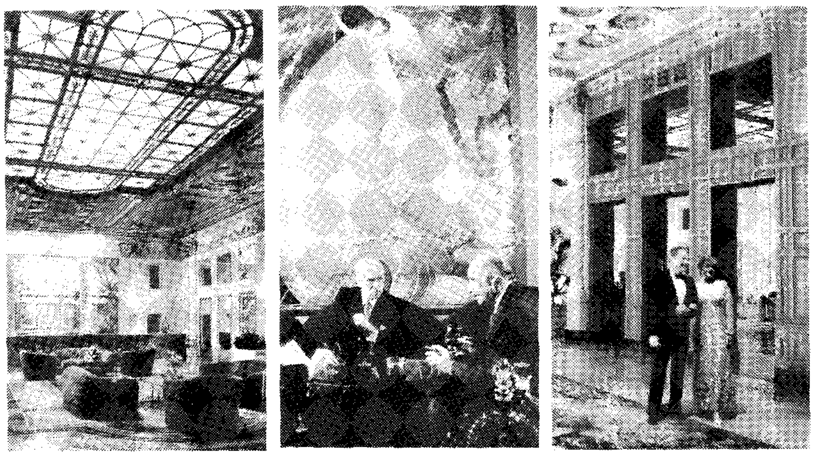
Jackson saw a Haitian he knew

standing by himself and went over to him. The man was perhaps ten feet from the others. He had just come from the fields. He was wearing a red bandanna on his head. He said that he had cut cane for three seasons. "You cut cane and you put it on the floor," he said. "A field walker tells you where to cut, and he tells you how much price you will be paid for the task. If you don't know how to cut the first time, they teach you how to do it." Then he said, "I am going to quit. After I finish the season. It is no good job. They don't take care of you if you get sick. If you die, they don't care. The work is hard, and the pay not enough. If you feel good for the day and you work hard, you can make some money. That the devil way of the sugarcane."

We went back to the group of Jamaicans. I thought that since they had now seen one man talk to us they might give up asking for money and talk themselves. They said we must have permission from their supervisor. Jackson said, "No, we want to talk to you." He took a pad of paper out of his pocket and flipped the pages, appearing to look for something, as a prop. The cutters just stood there watching him. We found the supervisor in the back of the camp, talking to a woman. He said that we could not talk to the cutters without the permission of the company and that if we were going to talk to a cutter about the work we should talk to him in the fields. Jackson said it was not possible to call a man from his work, and the supervisor said, "What I said, and I'm not going to withdraw on this, is the best place for you is the field." Then he put his hands in his pockets and walked away from us. Jackson said, "They wish the brain not to say anything."

We walked back to the street. Jackson said he had a friend named Horace, a Jamaican who lived in the camp, and we could talk to him, but it would have to be some other day, since he was now out of time.

THE soil on which most of the sugarcane is grown is flammable. Once ignited, it is not easily extinguished. Soil fires have a tendency to smolder. A man in Clewiston owns land that caught fire soon after he bought it, and burned for three years. The soil is called muck, and is composed of leaves and branches and vines and trees only partly decayed. Mainly



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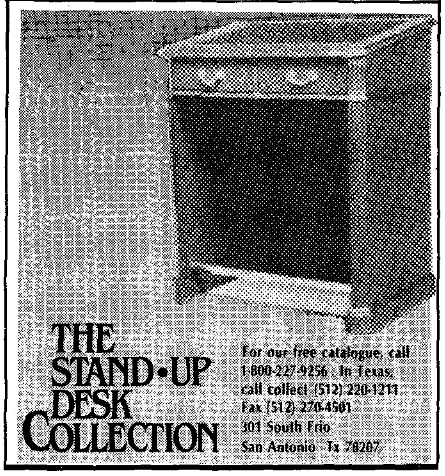
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it is swamp bottom from which the water has been drained. (Soil less decomposed than muck is peat.) It gives underfoot like a cushion. Standing in a muck field near a place where a cutter drops a bundle of cane, you feel the shock. After a rain, muck is a rich black, like a pigment; it almost shines. People call it black gold. Dry, it is gray and powdery. Growers liken it to talcum or feathers and say that you sink to your shoetops in it. Tractors disking the fields in preparation for planting stir up clouds of it, which rise and hang in sheets on the wind.

People noticed in clearing the land that the soil gave them a rash, and sometimes the rash developed sores. The rash they called muck sting. Against it supervisors wore high boots, riding breeches, and khaki shirts buttoned at the wrists, and field hands wore gloves and tied the cuffs of their trousers with string. Whatever accounted for the rash has been depleted by cultivation, but muck still contains a lot of bacteria; a man who receives a cut while working on the muck is immediately treated for infection.

Because the land is so flat, the fields lose practically no soil to erosion. What soil they do lose is to a process called subsidence: microorganisms turn the organic matter in the soil into carbon dioxide, inorganic compounds, and water. Subsidence proceeds at a rate of about one inch a year. Beneath the muck is limestone. How much muck remains in a field can be determined by driving along a canal and noting the depth of the soil above the rock.

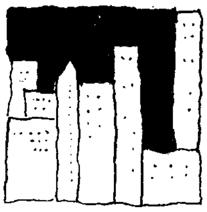
Most of the muck lies to the south and east of the lake. As one travels farther from it, the minerals diminish. West of Clewiston, the only patch of muck is a strip between one and three miles wide running west from close to the lake to near the old mill at Moore Haven. All around it is sand. Perhaps eighty-five per cent of the soil under cultivation is muck. The rest is either sand or a mixture of sand and muck called sandy muck or salt-and-pepper muck or black sand. Sandy soil composed of the smallest grains is called ball-bearing sand and is untillable: the grains will not support upright the weight of the cane. The sand by itself is not fertile; chemicals make it so. Some of the sandy land once supported cattle. When the cattle became unprofitable, growers began putting sugarcane on it.

Muck produces an abundance of cane, but not necessarily cane with a high amount of sugar. Nitrogen stimulates growth but inhibits the production of sucrose. On new muck land—particularly land that has first been used as pasture—a grower is likely to get vigorous growth and low sugar. Until the minerals in the soil can be brought into balance with fertilizers, the sugar recovered will be low in relation to the production of the field.

Some growers believe that any defects in a field can be overcome by fertilizers. Others contribute as little fertilizer as possible to a field, feeling that money spent on fertilizer is money from their pockets. Some growers believe they can keep the returns on a field high over the years by controlling the size and the schedule of the applications of fertilizer. They try to strike some balance between returns on the field and the cost of fertilizers. When a field has reached the point where it can no longer be farmed—when the soil over the limestone is too shallow to permit cultivation—it is turned into pasture. Men and women sitting at desks at the Florida Sugar Cane League and in offices at the corporations and behind the wheels of tractors and pickup trucks and jeeps in the fields occasionally wonder what the hell will be done with all that land when the muck disappears.

FOR the most part, the cutting of sugarcane is performed in the absence of white men. The cut foreman is in charge. Under his eye work the leadmen and the ticket writers, all past cutters who excelled. The row price comes from the grower to the cutters by way of the cut foreman, also called the crew leader. He carries out the grower's instructions on what fields to harvest, and in the case of fields damaged by frost passes on the information of where on the stalk the cut should be made. If he sees a man cutting recklessly, he will remind him of sound practices. Some cutters feel encumbered by the equipment; when they get partway down the field they take it off. If the cut foreman finds them, he will have them put it back on. The leadmen, also called field walkers or pushers, announce the row price to the cutters. (Ticket writers also do this.) If a cutter is leaving his stubble too high, or has too many tops in his pile, or is piling in a disorganized way, the pusher will call him back to correct his work. The pusher walks up and down the rows chopping back stubble and keeping the rows piled neatly. The ticket writer records the hours a cutter has worked and how much he has cut. If a cutter is working too slowly, the ticket writer has the authority to remove him from the field—what is called checking him out.

Crews amount usually to no fewer than twenty-five cutters and not more than fifty; it is difficult for a ticket writer to keep track of more. There are no two-way radios in the fields; when a ticket writer (or a leadman or a cutter) has something to tell another down the rows, he shouts. Sometimes, when the two are far apart, the message is picked up by voices in between and passed on.



If cutters have been cutting sloppily in favor of speed, they do not complain at being sent back to clean up their work. Otherwise, they resent it. It is not possible for the sugar left in the stalk to be recovered; the loader picks up only lengths of cane, not chips. Furthermore, it is someone else's job to make sure the field is left attractive to the grower's eye, should he ride by after the harvest. Cutters say that calling them back is a practice leadmen abuse; they say that leadmen employ it to slow down a cutter who might be making more money that day than the leadman.

Cane rows are five feet apart. Two men line up at four rows. Each lays the stalks he cuts across the inside two rows and throws his trash on his outside row. The rows in which he piles his cane are called pile rows or heap rows or windrows. The outside row is his trash pile. On a field where cutting has been completed, the pile rows alternate with the rows of trash like stripes on a flag. Cutters work often in pairs. A faster man handicaps a man cutting slower, because the stalks the faster man piles often spill into the slower man's row and must be cleared aside before the man working slower can make his cut. Likewise, having to cut and pile carefully in order to keep clear of the slower man's row costs the faster man time. Moreover, a slower man can impede a faster man if the cane he is cutting falls into the faster man's row.

Some pairs form spontaneously, some by the accident of where a cutter lines up, and some are long-standing. Over a season, few pairs remain intact; the rate at which a man cuts is not stable over time, and is not likely to keep pace with another's. The etiquette of the fields is that a cutter must give up his row if another arrives during lineup and says he is the partner of the man in the neighboring row. An ideal pair includes a left-handed and a right-handed cutter. Each will line up with his cutting hand outside, so he doesn't have to pull the cane across his body to pile it.

Cutters remove the leaves and the tops. Leaves contain mainly water and little sugar, and the tops have no sugar. In addition, the tops contain a wax that interferes with milling. Damage from frost begins at the top of the stalk and descends; in a frost-damaged field, the grower shows the cut foreman, who shows the leadmen, how much of the stalk to discard.

Cutters are morbidly fearful of snakes. They believe that only a fool or a man who cared little for his life would accept the existence of such a thing as a snake that is not fatally poisonous. A cutter who sees a snake sunning itself on the bank of a canal will often interrupt what he is doing to find a rock to drop on it. The bravest among them will kill any snake they see in the fields by beating it with a cane stalk. They believe that if they were to use their knives they would poison themselves later by bringing the residue of venom on the blade into contact with a stalk they were cutting to chew.

The cutters ride to and from the fields in school buses. The larger growers often have land in more than one county; it is not unusual for cutters to travel twenty-five miles to a field. Once the buses arrive in the fields, the cutters begin scanning the rows. What they are looking for is rows that thin out or have gaps. Once the bus stops, they race to those rows. A lot of accidents involving the knife take place during the rush to leave the bus and claim a row. Sometimes a row that looks lean from the front bears more heavily farther into the field, and a row that begins heavy can hit a place where lightning struck or the ground is not level and standing water has killed off the cane. Rarely, a cutter gets lucky and finds a row that is lean to the end

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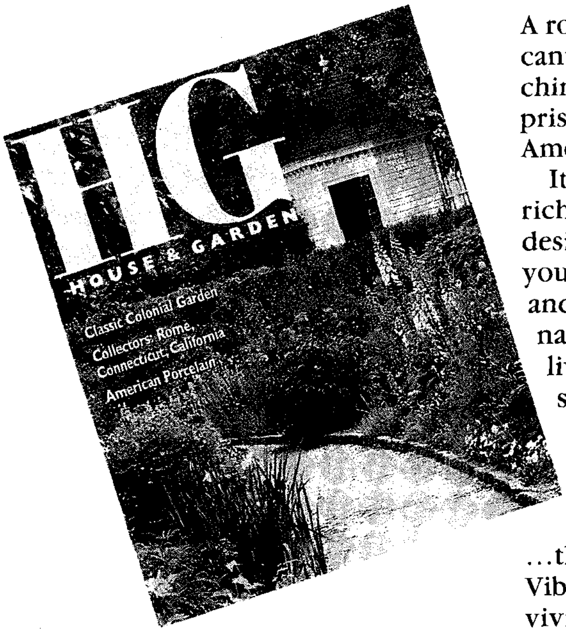

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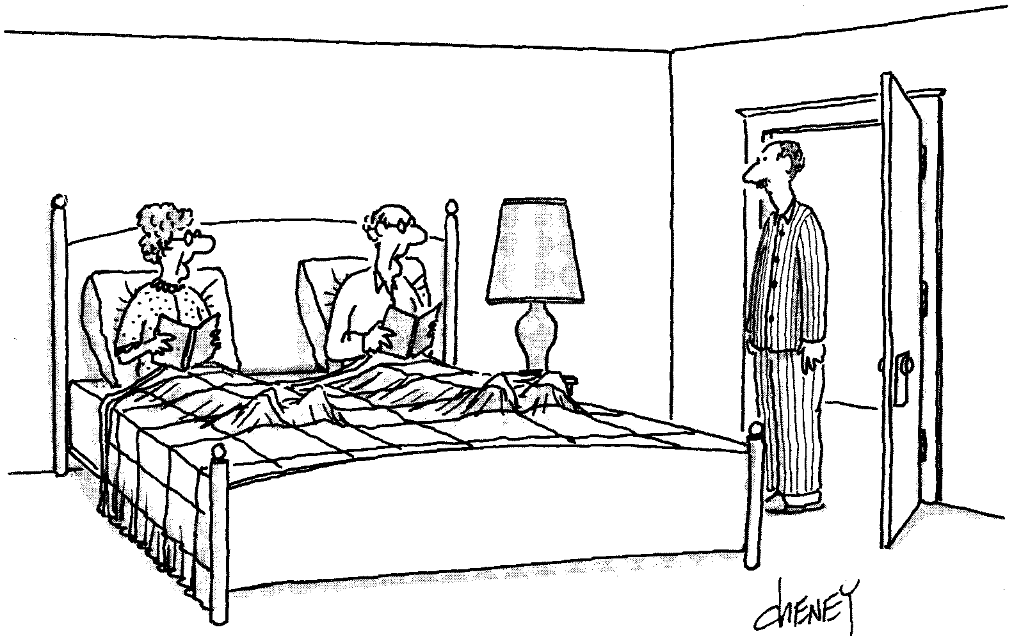
—rarely, because growers do not raise sugarcane to bear lightly.



"Son, your mother and I think that you are now old enough to get your own drink of water."

• •

Time for which a cutter must be paid begins when he steps off the bus. If no work is available—something that might happen toward the end of the day—the grower will often have him taken back to the camp; otherwise, he must be paid for the time he spends in the fields. When growers move cutters from a field on one side of the camp to one on the other, they have them taken by a route that does not carry them past the barracks, in order not to tempt them to quit for the day. Cutters slow down after lunch. A grower who wants a lot of work done fast will schedule it for the morning and then hold up the rice truck. The strongest cutters pace themselves and work with equal vigor all day. Once they finish a row, they line up at another. If the rows are light, they can line up as many as four times.

Cutters have a distaste for the grime of the fields. When cane burns, it forms on its stalk a sticky gum of carbonized sugar, which when mixed with the ash turns black, like pitch. The cutters come away from the stalks smeared with this paste, and after a few hours their clothing is black on one side of their bodies from shoulder to knee. They often close the top buttons of their collars and tie their shirt cuffs at the wrist so the cane top doesn't chafe them and also so the paste doesn't stain their skin. Some wear two pairs of pants, or an outer pair cut off at the knee. "If I do not dress in two pants, I be blacker than I black already," a cutter told me. Many wear hats to keep the dirt from their hair and also because the cane fibres irritate their scalps. Some wear bandannas tied across their faces against the ash and the dust. They believe that breathing the ash from the fields is unwholesome. They think that it fills up their lungs and shortens their lives. Many grow beards to protect their faces against the dirt and the cold, and because they believe that a beard gives them strength. At the end of the day, covered with the ash and the sap and the dirt of the fields, the cutters smell of sweat and sugar.

A cutter is expected to cut eight tons a day, which the majority can do in six hours. The most capable can manage ten and a half. On days when the demands of the mill are extraordinary, cutters sometimes work into the evening. If the light in the fields is not sufficient to let them see what they are doing, they work by the headlights of the buses.

At the start of the harvest, each cutter is issued a pair of canvas gloves with leather palms. The gloves last perhaps a week, maybe ten days, and are expensive to replace. Most cutters work without them. Under the abrasion of the handle of the knife the cutters' palms blister, then callus deeply. Over the course of the season, they stiffen and become smooth; they feel like linoleum. The cutters apply lotion to them to keep the surface from cracking. Once they are home, the hand takes weeks to return to usefulness. It causes them pain up their arms to the shoulder and it cramps. They rub Ben-Gay on it for pain and wintergreen oil to relax it, and see a doctor if it refuses to heal.

The Florida Sugar Cane League shows a film it has had made for the purposes of lobbying and public relations, which includes a scene of a sugarcane cutter at work while a narrator says, "To watch a West Indian wield a cane knife is to see a centuries-old art." A person might come away from this film pleased at knowing an abstruse, *National Geographic*-type fact about the islands in the West Indies: men there happen to excel without effort at the rather obscure and dangerous task of cutting sugarcane, the way people somewhere else excel at holding their breath for long periods of time and so become exceptional pearl divers.

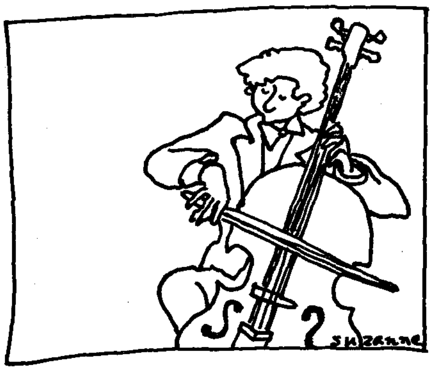
Because the film was made for the purposes of lobbying and public relations and describes harvest practices in a specific area of America where the harvest has traditionally been carried out by black people, it bears an additional implication: isn't it remarkable that black men in America simply lack this skill, just plain flat don't have it, but no wonder, it's an *exotic* skill, and we have to go to an exotic (and backward) place to obtain artisans still capable of performing it. The film does not say anything about the circumstances of the life of the man whose image appears on the screen—circumstances that one might guess include distress to the extent that he is willing to endure the hardships and dangers of the cane fields, the loneliness of living away from home for almost half the year while his children grow up without him, while his family changes and forms alliances that it will take him some time to penetrate, if he is able to at all, and the worry over whether the woman with whom he shares some intimacy might be sharing herself with another man. It says nothing about sorrow. Another way of framing the sentiment of the narrator's remark is to say, "To watch an American Negro pick cotton is to watch a centuries-old art." Furthermore, it is simply wrong. Very few West Indian men have ever held a cane knife before arriving in Florida.

At the start of the season, cutters are given eight days to learn to cut cane. The growers are allowed to request sixty per cent of their cutters from the previous year, the reason for this stipulation being that the positions are coveted in the West Indies, where jobs are so scarce and wages so low; this arrangement is a compromise among the West Indian politicians who control the right to hand out invitations to interviews as patronage, their governments, which would like to spread the opportunity as widely as possible, and the growers, whose interest is in assembling the most capable work force. Among the forty per cent who do not receive invitations to return are some who reapply and are accepted. That means that each year somewhere between twenty-five and forty per cent of the cutters are cutting cane for the first time. During the eight-day period, cutters can receive an hourly wage or they can choose to work at the piece rate. Experienced cutters often accept the hourly rate and use this time to work themselves into shape. If they hit their pace early, they can slack off, since no matter what their production their pay is the same. During the period of training, the growers note the cutters who are struggling, which does not require close attention; the field after an hour or so looks like a track on which a race is in progress. The contract permits the growers to test a cutter's production. Some growers measure a length of cane and require the cutter to harvest it in a certain amount of time. Some measure his production over the course of an hour. If a cutter fails to meet a standard, the grower can remove him from the field—can check him out. A cutter checked out three times can be sent home. If this should happen before half the season has expired, the cutter must pay the cost of his ticket over and back. If he manages to remain past the halfway point, the grower pays his transportation. To be certain of remaining on the contract, a cutter must regularly harvest a minimum of a ton an hour.

Painstaking growers might show the cutters a field cut to standard by their leadmen, the rows piled as carefully as cordwood, the stubble cut low and clean. More likely, a leadman will demonstrate only the elements of cutting: stepping forward with the foot on the side of one's cutting hand (keeping the other foot back and clear of the blade on its follow-through); bending over and wrapping an arm around a bunch of stalks and raising the blade up over the shoulder and bringing it down hard across one's body, striking the cane at the base of the stalk; shaving the tops from the stalks with short, flicking strokes; piling; and knowing the moment to brace the end of the knife against the toe of one's boot and run the file past it to sharpen it. He might tell the cutters not to cross the pile rows (which are slippery) while holding a knife, and that if they have to jump a ditch they should throw their knives over first. Then he might cut a few feet of cane, saying, "You got to learn to cut your stubble low, pile the cane straight, cut the top them off, and make a trash pile."

Once a cutter has learned to cut stubble low and pile the cane and keep neat separate rows and to swing the blade with the least resistance and to know the moment to stop work and sharpen his blade, the task becomes a matter of concentration. He must concentrate on speed and a rhythm that consumes the least of his energy. Letting his mind drift to the question of, say, whether the man who sells him bottled gas for his stove is knocking at his door with a gift in his hand may mean experiencing the sudden sight of his blood.

I OBTAINED an introduction to an ex-convict called Caveman, who drove a tractor for one of the growers.



He had a small, strutty, high-strung friend named Anthony, who also drove a tractor, and who sometimes accompanied us when we went out looking for cutters. They picked me up one afternoon at the Clewiston Inn, driving Anthony's car. Caveman said, "Let my chauffeur drive. I'll sit in the back." We had travelled two blocks when Anthony remembered that the retread on his right front tire was about to let go, so we drove back to the hotel and picked up my rental car. Anthony settled himself behind the wheel and said, "This car *fits* me. I like this car."

We drove west, in the direction of Moore Haven, slipping past the McDonald's and the Burger King and the K mart and the high school and the houses and the motels and the hospital and the police car parked in the median with a mannequin at the wheel to scare speeders and the airport and the golf course and the Sugar Cane League and over the railroad tracks leading from the fields to the mill and into the vast panorama of cane toward Shawnee Farm, which the cutters call Shiny Farm and the local black people call Chinee Farm, or Chinese Farm.

"You don't have no kind of benefit cutting cane, 'cause it's *piece*work," Anthony said. "It going to be *rough* now, too, since it turning cold."

"That frost *hurt* the cane," Caveman said. "They get frost and it be white in the morning, then the sun come out and heat it up. It get *sweet*." Then he said, "You make a good chauffeur, Anthony."

"I got a sister damn near a genius," Anthony said.

Shawnee is a village of Homasote cabins built on stilts in the shade of some oaks about eight miles west of Clewiston and a mile from the lake. The cabins are arranged along a road in the shape of a horseshoe. Anthony drove slowly past them. On the porch of one, a cutter without a shirt stood at the sink, washing his cane knife. Anthony stopped the car, and Caveman called him over. He walked toward us carrying his knife, dripping water from the blade. Caveman asked if he cut cane.

He said, "Yeah, I cut some cane."

A man was watching us from the window of the house. He called something to the man we were talking to. The man turned from his waist, and I noticed that he had a muscle in his back where I had never seen one before.

Caveman said, “You work seven days?”

“Yes.”

Caveman looked at me. There was a silence. Then Caveman nodded to the cutter, and Anthony drove ahead. Caveman said, “I was going to talk to the man, but I don’t know what it is you want to know, so I didn’t know what to ask.”

Anthony took us back to the country road. He said, “I did that cane cutting one time. About thirty minutes. I was going through that cane, chopping it, chop, chop, chop, and I said, ‘Hey, man, this ain’t no job for you.’ ”

I asked what he did the rest of the year.

“In the off-season, I haul ass to Alabama and play all the girls I can play,” he said. “I a *sea*sonal man.”

Anthony thought it might be a good idea for us to go down to Belle Glade and look for cutters there.

I said that Belle Glade had looked to me like a rough town.

Anthony said, “It ain’t all *looks*. It’s for real. That’s the Jamaican capital.” He pronounced Jamaican the way a lot of black people in south Florida do: “Jew-maican.” Then he said, “The Jamaican thinks he’s smart. You can’t tell him nothing. They smart. They *too* smart.”

First, we drove to U.S. Sugar’s Benbow camp, out by the levee. Anthony brought us around the back, out of sight of the supervisor’s office by the entrance. We parked and walked over to a group of cutters standing beside their house. A numbers runner among them was writing down bets on a pad, like a waiter. The runners have territories. A small camp might belong to one runner; at a larger camp, a runner might have only a building or a floor, or the men of a particular island. The payoff is based on the running of the dogs at a track in Miami. When the runner was done, Caveman asked the others if they would mind if I asked some questions. One of the cutters said, “Ask,” but when he saw that I was going to write down what he said he told us that we first had to go see the boss man.

We got back in the car and drove farther into the camp. Caveman said he knew someone who lived in it. We parked again. Caveman saw two men leaning against a car outside a bunkhouse. He said, “Hey, where Robbie Lee stay?”

“Down there with the blue car in the yard.”

“He home?”

“I don’t know.”

We got in the car and Anthony drove us in the direction the man had pointed. Anthony said, “Which blue car? That one there?”

Caveman said, “Yeah, that the Robbie Lee car right there.”

We got out and talked to a man standing by the car. He was an American, perhaps a bus driver. Caveman said, “You know a little about that cane, don’t you?”

The man said, “Hell, no, I don’t study that at all.”

A man carrying a toolbox came around the corner of the house. Anthony said, “You pull cane?”

The man said, “I don’t know a damn thing about it.”

Caveman took me aside and said, “They *know* it, but they won’t talk it.”

Anthony said, “You-all got the girls occupied out here?”

The man with the toolbox said, “We ain’t got no girls out here.”

Anthony turned away and said, “Yeah, tell that stuff to somebody else.”

We were standing by the houses for the field walkers. A woman banged open the screen door of one and started across the road. Anthony brightened. He said, “Hey, Miss, you going to be occupied this weekend?”

She said, “I’m occupied all the time.”

Anthony said, “Damn, I think I should have put on my Michael Jackson suit.”

From inside a house a woman’s voice said, “Hey, Caveman.”

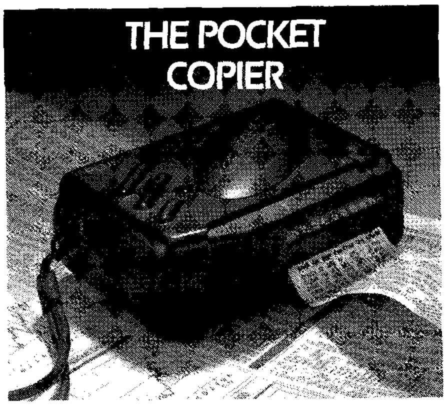
Anthony said, “Somebody know you, Cave.”

The woman said, “Caveman, get over here.”

Caveman said, “Yes, Ma’am.”

He went into the house and came out a few moments later, saying he had asked them if they wanted to say anything about sugarcane and they’d said, “Yeah, it’s hell out there.”

Anthony walked back to the car to get his sunglasses. A young woman came out of one house and crossed a small yard to another. Anthony said, “Man, this camp got so many pretty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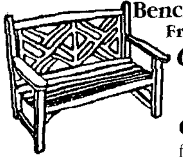


women." Then, "Yo, baby, get that frown off your face!"

We went to the supervisor's house. His name, we had been told, was Justin Brown, and Caveman knocked on the door and asked the boy who answered it, "Is Brown home?" We stepped inside the kitchen, which was dark. There was a clock on the far wall, and a plaster crucifix and a set of praying hands on a table. Brown said that we would have to talk to the head office before I could speak to any of the cutters. He was friendly, though. He asked Anthony's name and then Caveman's, and then said, "Caveman . . . *Cave*man," and started laughing.

On our way out, Anthony called Caveman by his given name, saying, "That man *knows* you from someplace, Willie."

We got back in the car. Anthony said, "I'll bring you through some cane, man." Then he asked how I knew about sugarcane, and I told him I had heard about it in New York. "All the way up there," he said. "Somebody went all the way up to New York City from Florida, Cave. Might be some brother."

Caveman nodded. He said he knew a Barbadian who had arrived on the contract and then married an American woman. He thought the man might talk to me.

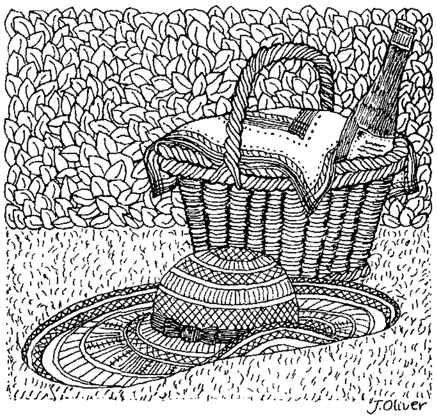
Anthony said, "Those Barbadians, they'll get over here to cut cane, but they don't like it that much. They'll cut cane to *get* here, but they don't care too much about that cane. The thing is to *stay* here."

SUGARCANE in south Florida is grown mainly on farms of immense acreage. There is no grower with, say, twenty or thirty acres in cane, or even two or three hundred. A small cane farm is five hundred acres. The profit is not large, so the farms have to be.

Men who drive tractors or operate harvesters or work in some way in the fields often talk wistfully of owning a small cane farm, but that is not a simple ambition. "To start a farm"—this is a man who runs a harvesting crew—"you will want thirty thousand tons of production. At forty tons an acre, and with a quarter to a fifth of the farm lying fallow each year, that's a thousand acres, which is two million for land. You could cut the acreage in half, but you'd need about the same amount of equipment, so you might as well have the extra land. You could get pretty well equipped to farm it, with some secondhand equipment, for about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. You'd need three tractors, two large disks, plows, chisels, a bulldozer, a dragline, shop equipment and shop, a secondhand dump truck, tools, a pickup, spray rigs, and scratchers. The problem is there are no local contractors you can call up and say, 'I have fifty hours' work here. Can you come out and do it?' All the equipment's too expensive for anyone to be in that kind of business waiting for calls.

"Let's assume you've got sand land and can harvest it with machines. You'll need another two hundred and fifty thousand for harvesting equipment. If you're not using machines, you've got to build barracks to the government regulations and feed the cutters and staff the camp, or you've got to contract with the mill for their labor. In addition to your harvester, a quarter of a million gets you two more tractors and some wagons for hauling cane, one water wagon, one fuel wagon, and a parts truck with toolboxes and oil. Out of a thousand acres you'd have eight hundred in production, so that's thirty-two thousand tons a year. Profit at six dollars a ton, which is reasonable, is a hundred and ninety-two thousand to put in your pocket after harvesting and growing costs. And you better not be into the bank then, because you can figure the interest on two and a half million, and what you made doesn't cover it."

Approximately a hundred and thirty-five farmers grow sugarcane in south Florida. The five largest growers are corporations or coöperatives. The sixth-largest is Joe Marlin Hilliard. Hilliard's farm was begun as a cattle ranch early in the century by his grandfather, whose sons, Marlin and Joe A., ran it. They began by homesteading and bought their first land in 1932, then kept buying east, which is how they arrived in Clewiston. Joe Marlin made part of the cattle ranch a cane farm in 1961 by planting two hundred and seventy-three acres. Joe A., Joe Marlin's father, is still active in the operation of his cattle interests. Marlin Hilliard died in 1981; he was backing his jeep onto the highway and was run down by a truck.



Hilliard's farm contains a hundred and fifteen sections of land. A section is one square mile, six hundred and forty acres. The farm is large enough that different parts of it receive different measures of rainfall over the course of a year. People in that country say about the Hilliards, "They own half the world down here." Joe Marlin gets around the whole place about once a month. He has twelve thousand acres in sugarcane, close to twenty square miles, most of it on sand, all of it harvested mechanically.

The size alone of Hilliard's farm would make him a figure of importance in south Florida, but it has also been his contribution to present a successful model of mechanical harvesting. In 1980, U.S. Sugar planned to increase the capacity of its mill at Clewiston. The company itself had the acreage for a portion of the increase. Other growers, Joe Marlin among them, were asked to supply the rest. While he was happy to plant additional fields, he did not want to build barracks for the extra cutters. Since his new fields were on sand, he decided to try harvesting them by machine. After some success the first year, he managed to persuade a few other growers to go in with him on more equipment, and they formed a coöperative called Sugarland Harvesting.

The harvest of a field by machine costs half as much as by hand. There are no labor camps to support and no cutters to feed. A machine enters a field as soon as the fire is out; often the cane is inside the mill the same day. Cane cut by hand takes at least two days to reach the mill: it is burned one day and cut the next; frequently it is delivered the third. Machines harvest in all but the heaviest rains. Cutters will continue work begun before rain but won't enter a field in the rain. What trash the machines leave behind spreads itself over the field, forming an obstacle to weeds. There is no need of a continuous loader; the mechanical harvester delivers its cane into a wagon hauled by a tractor. Since machines cut the cane into smaller sections—called billets or batons—more can fit into a railroad car or a truck bed. Machines cut a field in a quarter of the time.

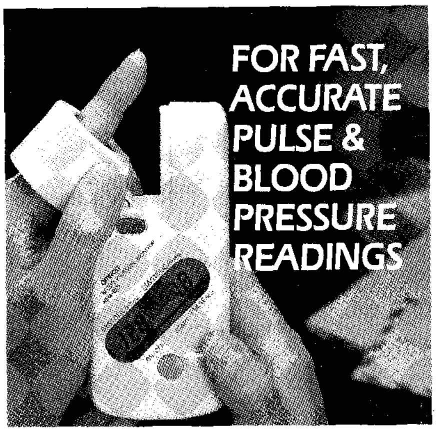
Two objections are made to mechanical harvesting: the mills say that the machines send them too much trash, and the growers say that the harvesters tear up the fields. Trash is roots and dirt and tops and leaves and dead animals, mostly rabbits. Owners of a mill receiving, say, ten per cent trash believe themselves to be operating at a loss ten per cent of the time. Furthermore, they say that trash is a thief. They say it steals sugar by absorbing juice during milling and drawing it off with the bagasse—what is left of the stalks and the leaves and the tops after they have run through the mill. Moreover, they say, it clogs their machinery, and the dirt abrades their rollers, although this is more a problem with sand than with muck, which is too soft to be of much concern. Hand-cut cane is perhaps four per cent trash. Machine-cut is seven to twelve.

A grower using mechanical harvesters has to plant more often to offset the decline of his fields. If he is converting to the use of machines, he needs to build new roads; farm trails through the fields are not sufficient for the constant passage of heavy equipment. He needs also to build a gravel pit for the maintenance of the roads, and he needs a water truck to spray the roads to keep the dust down. He needs to build and staff a shop to service his new equipment. He needs the best drainage in his fields, so that the harvesters don't bog. Machines waste land; the growers cannot plant too close to headlands or beside canals because the harvesters fall into them. Growers call this tax land, since they pay the government on it but get nothing from it. If there is cane on it, left from a field that has not been replanted since being harvested by hand, the grower sends a cutter down it, and that is expensive.

Some of the mills complain that machines often leave cane in the field. The mills say that machines do not cut the cane as close to the ground as the cutters do. There is a saying in the sugar business that your profit is in your stubble; the mills say that every half inch of stubble left on an acre equals half a ton of cane. They also say that mechanical harvesters smear fallen cane—make a tearing cut that spews chips from the stalk and splatters juice into the field. They say that as many as three tons can be lost in a field by smearing.

Some growers keep machines ready to cover lapses in production on the part of the cutters (their performance declines in the heat, for example), or to replace them if they should strike. In the past, one grower who did no mechanical harvesting kept a harvester parked in view of the barracks. To a grower, the appeal of mechanical harvesting is the chance to bank money. The costs of his farm—taxes, fertilizer, seed, payroll, food for the cutters, equipment, and maintenance—he has reduced as much as he can, and now they are fixed. He must raise crops that bear abundantly and are rich in sucrose; if, at the end of the season, he harvests thirty tons an acre, he is subtracting costs from less than if he had harvested seventy. The only place to shave costs is from the expense of the harvest. The hand cutters are already laboring at peak efficiency. Savings there can be had only by falsifying the hours the cutters spend in the fields. The concerns of a grower using machines are whether or not he is delivering to the mill cane that will return enough money to have made the shift from hand cutting worthwhile, and whether or not he is damaging his fields. The first he can know right away. The second will take a few years to determine; the greatest decline with machine-harvested fields is from the first stubble crop to the second. If the savings are high enough, a grower can tolerate the loss of tons in the field.

A number of growers have tried mechanical harvesting in the past and been disappointed. Many own machines from various periods of design. There are harvesters parked on the lot at the U.S. Sugar mill in Clewiston. They are huge, lumbering things that look as if they were designed for work at the bottom of the sea or on the surface of the moon. There are vines and flowers growing through them. The growers feel that no matter how



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badly a West Indian cuts he doesn't tear up a field. If the government went out of the business of protecting the price of sugar, and the price fell too low, or if there were a crippling strike, or if the industry had too much trouble with lawsuits on behalf of the cutters, hand cutting might become a luxury.

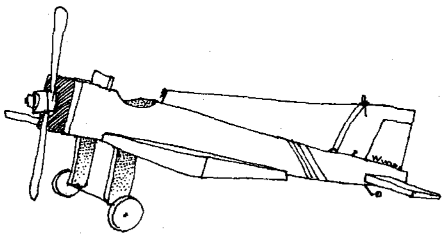
THE price that the growers receive for their sugar is protected by quotas on imports. Many people believe that government support of sugar prices is not in the interests of the rest of the country. Denying our market to sugar from the Caribbean, as well as from the Philippines and from Central America, only makes it harder for people in those places to earn a living, and that difficulty is addressed in the form of American aid sent to replace money that might have been made selling sugar in America. Moreover, excluding from the United States sugar from Central America and the Caribbean encourages farmers there to grow drug crops. Also, it encourages countries like the Dominican Republic, the largest exporter of sugar to the United States and one that has seen its quotas cut almost by half in the last two years alone, to sell sugar to the Soviet Union, which is glad of more trade in the Caribbean. Since 1981, imports of sugar have dropped from five million tons a year to just over a million, which has made a lot of Americans former workers at sugar refineries. It is possible that the government support of sugar prices costs Americans three billion dollars a year in the form of higher prices for candy bars and ice cream and salad dressings and cereals and canned soups and vegetables and all the other products that contain sugar. If a percentage of the cost of foreign aid were figured in, the amount would be higher. The sugar lobby represents two thousand growers of sugarcane and ten thousand growers of sugar beets, who amount to less than one-half of one per cent of America's farmers. The reason it is so powerful is that it has come to have a fortuitous alliance with the National Corn Growers Association. In 1984, Coca-Cola, the largest consumer of sugar, began using only high-fructose corn syrup. Corn growers now had an interest in seeing that the price of sugar remained as high as possible; they set the price of corn syrup just below it. A congressman from the Northeast has said that the growers of sugarcane and sugar beets and the growers of corn have together organized Congress almost as effectively as has the National Rifle Association.

AN old man in Belle Glade: "I come into the Glades from Tennessee on December 1, 1942. I had signed up at the House of Customs, which they had a House of Customs back in those days. I got here on a Sunday. They wanted to bring us in open trucks from Memphis, as if this was cattle, but they must have changed their minds because we come on a bus. They had a receiving station and they had a doctor there, same as they do in the Army for an exam. I had a brother to come with me, but he wasn't in good enough shape for the exam, so he went back. Tuesday, they mustered me out to the Bare Branch camp under a man named MaCleod. He had Ritta and Bare Branch camps. He treated people like they were dogs.

"I had heard about the cane offhandedly. There were a lot of what we called man-catchers out there to hustle labor for this or that work, in all fields, not just sugarcane—the highways, the railroads, the turpentine—and they had got people I knew of, signed them up, and brought them to the cane fields, so I knew the work was there, but I didn't exactly know what it was. I hadn't talked to nobody who'd come home from it. In back times, the companies paid off once a month. I only come down to make a couple of paydays, three or four. But I never did meet the payday. I left the first or second Saturday in January.

"What happened to get me out of it, I started writing letters. First letter I writ from here I wrote to Chief Justice Hughes, I believe he was the head of the Department of Justice; I was writing him because they had U.S. on the signs for the company. He answered my letter in six days. Said he got the letter I wrote him, and the way he explained it to me, the company was a subsidiary, and the subsidiary had been sold to a subsidiary. Now, I don't know, but that's what he wrote me. Then I wrote to the people in the Customs House that sent me there. They said the big fish was paying the little fish to misuse us and there wasn't anything I could do about it. They were using slavery and every other kind of thing else. After that, I kept my mouth shut and used every chance I had to escape.

"I cut sugarcane around twenty-one, twenty-two days—that is, I worked *hard* for twenty-one days, where I learned about the roughness of cane, and after that no more sugarcane for me. Christmas Day, I made a plan to run away. I worked about sixteen more days, left, and when I stopped running I was in South Bay. If I had knew there was cane in South Bay, I wouldn't have stopped then. I run into two mens from a labor camp and I got work there picking beans. Didn't tell nobody who I was or where I'd come from. Kept my head *down*. I was determined not to get caught, because I knew if you run away they comed and get you and chained you to the bed at night. I saw people locked to the beds. I didn't only see that, I saw some men get a beating. They whopped you with a cane knife. Come around with a cane knife and a sap. Beat and bruised you. It wasn't no freedom, it was worse than the pen. If you had brought a wife or a lady friend, and you weren't no good help, they would take your lady and give her to someone else to sleep with. If you didn't dance to the superintendent's music, they took her."



IN the past, cutters who were fortunate might have ended up at Click Farm, working for Fisher Ange, Jr., the farm manager, whose father had been farm manager before him. In 1986, Click Farm began a two-year trial of mechanical harvesting, which became permanent. There is a certain amount of pain for Fisher in watching the fields he grows torn up by harvesters. Sometimes he passes one that has just been cut and is rough and sorry-looking, and thinks, Look how they scalped that field.

Click Farm occupies what was once an old slough from the lake, outside Moore Haven. It is near the Okeelanta camp, at the old Moore Haven mill, and the U.S. Sugar camp at Benbow. A dirt road leading to it from the paved county road runs straight for a mile and a half, beside a canal, through the fields. The camp consists of the farm office, three warehouse barracks made of metal, and two trailers. The cutters lived in the barracks and the leadmen and ticket writers in the trailers. Nearby to the west is the shop—several outbuildings and open-sided sheds with tractor tires piled in them and tractors parked for repair. In front of the barracks are borders of red flowers. The barracks have poured-concrete floors. They are made of aluminum, with slightly peaked roofs; they look like Monopoly hotels. The view from their windows across the tops of the cane to the levee is about two miles. The view in all other directions is of cane. Out the back door of the barracks, beside the fields, are clothes dryers and clotheslines and a small cement building, where in the past the men were paid in cash by the ticket writers while a deputy watched and buses waited to take them to town, and where they sat and told jokes and drank beer and played reggae tapes loud and danced with each other.

Fisher is tall, with red hair thinning on top, which he usually covers with a cap or with a cowboy hat made of straw. "As a child," he says, "I was red-haired and freckle-faced, fire red." He is fifty-two. He has a large frame and big hands. His mouth hardly moves when he talks. His complexion is high-colored. Sitting in the cab of his truck, figuring the row price on a calculator, he wears reading glasses, which give him the look of a scholar. He has a leather belt that says "Fish" on the back, with a buckle that says "Sugar" on it. His dog is named Sugar. Around his neck he wears a braided gold chain from which hangs a cross, and he has a gold bracelet on one wrist and a silver watch on the other. On the visor of his Click Farm-issue sky-blue pickup is a button with a pair of hands joined at the palms and the saying "Life Is Fragile, Handle with Prayer." He once sent home a cutter who had threatened him. He thinks now that he might have provoked the man. "You know more when you're young," he says. He occasionally has a backward, inverted, double-talk way of speaking; once I heard him on the phone, planning a vacation, say, "Nothing I need to bring, which I hope there isn't?" Among the other growers he has the reputation of raising an abundance of excellent cane. He is popular with the people who work for him. The cutters called him Mr. Fisher. He oversees the burning of a field as seldom as possible, preferring to assign the job. He dislikes the commotion; moreover, he has had two heart attacks, the first while burning. "The second I had harvesting," he says. "I knew I was having it, and I waited until my crew was out of the fields. Then I went back to the office and said I was having a heart attack, and they all laughed at me, because I was just standing there, but I went to the hospital and they said, 'Yup, he's having a heart attack.' That laid me up about eight weeks. We set up a two-way radio by the side of the bed."

Fisher describes Click as the farm of last resort and as the last stop on the way home to Jamaica, because so many discontented cutters were shipped there from larger growers and then settled down. He says he was never certain whether to take this as a compliment.

Until Click Farm switched to mechanical harvesting, and even for a while afterward, Fisher regularly received a letter or a card from one cutter or another who had worked for him but had not received a request to come back. A number would arrive around Valentine Day. A typical one was a store-bought card that had on its cover a drawing of a chipmunk holding a strawberry wrapped in a bow and standing beside a bush from which a heart was hanging. The background was pink, and above the chipmunk was printed in black, "A Valentine from Your Secret Pal. Can you keep a secret? . . . " And inside: "So can I! Happy Valentine's Day from Guess Who?" Under that was written "To Mr. Fisher with lot of love." The note enclosed, written by a cutter from Spring Ground District, Spaulding P.O., Clarendon, said:

HELLO MR. FISHER

Good day to you and your family and let hope you are all fine. This is my greates priviledge to writ you this letter. I am longing to hear from you so I am asking you please if you could give me any information about this coming season, I am try my best but I cannot make it out hear things are very rough. May God bless you.

For five years, beginning in 1958, when Fisher got out of the service, he lived in Fort Myers, on Florida's west coast. He found a job selling insurance, and had no intention of returning to the Glades, but the Cuban revolution took place, opening up lots of new land

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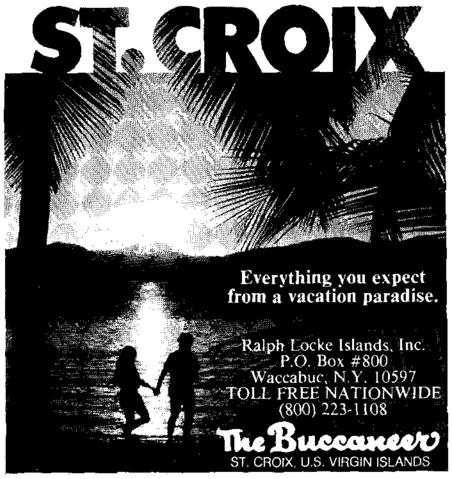
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to sugarcane, and eventually he grew tired of his life as a salesman. "It's hard to sell an idea," he says. "Whenever you go to sell a person on an idea, you got to start from scratch. If you go to sell him a car, a man's already got his mind made up he wants a car—you just have to sell him the type." Otherwise, nearly all the events of his life have taken place on a landscape enclosed by Moore Haven, Clewiston, the shore of the lake, and the borders of the fields he has care of.

With Fisher: "This is the Benbow camp, and this is where I was born, the house was right here where this open space is by these banana trees. I wasn't born in a hospital. I lived in this camp from 1937 to 1947—first ten years of my life. My father had come from Arcadia, which is a citrus-and-cattle town about ninety miles from here, between here and Sarasota, on the west coast, to work for the Southern Sugar Corporation, and apparently the mill went bust and the Mott family picked up the old Southern Sugar Mill and called it U.S.S.C. My daddy went to work for them as a mechanic repairing tractors, but he only did that a few months; then they made him foreman. I don't think they had much more at the time than about four hundred acres, and this was one of the first camps here. My dad worked for the Sugar Corporation eighteen years, then quit and went to work for a man named Moore, who was the vice-president of the Stokely-Van Camp Canneries, out of Knoxville, Tennessee—you still see their products on the shelf all the time, at least in the South, I don't know about anywhere else—and he worked for them from 1947 to 1952, being farm manager on a hundred-and-sixty-acre farm growing and harvesting sugar. They loaded about six or seven railroad cars a day back then. We lived at Moore Farm, and then we moved down the road to Click Farm; my dad didn't change his occupation any, just changed farms. He was there '52 to '74, working for Click, and I started working for Sugarcane Harvesters, four farms that had been harvesting separately: Roger Weekes, Moore Farm, Friarson Farms, and Click Farm. They incorporated in 1963 and hired me as their manager, and I have been here ever since. I got one retired sister that worked for Pan American for thirty years, second sister's a nurse, and then I've got a younger brother in La Belle and he's a farmer—vegetables. My brother and my sisters all have college educations. I'm the only one that didn't get one.

"I had an exciting youth—it just doesn't sound exciting. Till I was five years old, I didn't know there was anybody else but a black boy around, because that's who I played with. We chased rabbits when the men burned the cane fields—mainly those ones right over there up by the levee. Hit them with cane stalks. You'd go home with a string of rabbits, and your mother would cook them up. Smother them with gravy and white rice, and that was really a specialty. I could stand some of that right now. How we got around is rode horses. In those days, growers would cut the cane with domestic help. They would take a train through the South—Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, some from Virginia—and they'd go out and try and recruit cutters, say, 'Down in Florida, we're cutting sugarcane,' and get them down here. You have to understand that in those days they were not far from slavery in south Florida, and a white man was something to be feared. You brought these people down here and they didn't particularly like the work, but you'd have to do what you had to to keep a work force here—anything short of violence, I guess. Like a man wants to go home, it wasn't as easy as it is today to get transportation. You just didn't get him transportation, or you would tell him he could go home tomorrow. Whatever you had to do to get him to spend one more day in the field. If you want to use your imagination, there were some tough white people down here in those days. The people who did the harvest were bad, too. A lot were fugitives or wanted in some other state. Dad always carried a pair of brass knuckles in his back pocket, and that was protection against a man with a cane knife. So that was basically the rules of the road—they'd bring a man in and tell him what was expected of him and assign him a barracks and make him part of a team, cutters and loader, and they would cut cane or load a wagon, and the cane was transported to the siding, and at the end of the day they had a blackboard on the wall of the commissary that would say Crew No. 1 loaded how much cane and that equalled x amount of dollars. If you had any problem, that's where it was, on those steps. If you had any confrontation brewing with anyone, that's where you were going to meet up with it; many times there was physical violence, hand to hand. My daddy used whatever means necessary to carry out his responsibilities, force if he had to, but that's not the way he preferred to go. Back then, the foremen had the advantage, because they were dominant, so mostly it was a matter of talk and debate. You didn't get much resistance out of anybody. Today, there's more recourse for the cutters; they have legal service. Anyway, while these people were out recruiting they'd bring back livestock, horses to replace their own, and my daddy would bring me back a Shetland pony, so I had my own transportation, and I guess I did physically use the camp to reënact whatever cowboy movie I had seen the week before, use the commissary, which was over there where you see those cottages, as the old saloon, and do that all week. I'd tie my horse up outside the commissary and walk in and say 'Roy, give me a Coke.' I'd be using the sugar estate as a Western town. And Roy would say, 'I don't have permission from your daddy to give you a Coke.' So I'd go outside and get a scrap of paper and scrawl something on it—I didn't know how to write yet—and walk back in and hand it to him and say, 'Roy, Daddy give me a note to get a Coke,' and he'd say, 'Well, all right.'

"My dad was in charge of all the camps from here to Clewiston. They cut green cane then. The schoolhouse was the church and the place for the Saturday-night dance. My daddy had to be like a deputy sheriff. Saturday night brought the shootouts and the cutups and the fistfights, and Sunday morning brought church, and Monday brought work. You didn't think anything about taking care of domestic problems. I saw my daddy come home one time all bloody and he had over two hundred holes in his shirt, and it was from a woman. She and her husband had been having a fight in the saloon in the camp, and my dad was sent in to break it up—Dad acted as his own policeman—and he was having a tussle, actually a fistfight, with her husband, and the woman got mad, and she jumped on his back, and she had this little old pocketknife, just with about a quarter-inch blade, and she started sticking him in the back, just peppering his back. It was rough. Everybody there was tough—not me, but my daddy and the people his age were.

"If you worked for the company and you weren't sick, you were supposed to be on the job. I was with my dad one time—this is maybe 1940 or '41, I guess I was three or four, and, as I said, everyone used to get paid by the blackboard at the commissary. And this one big black guy, about six foot four and huge—my dad was six foot three and weighed about two twenty, and this guy made my dad look like a dwarf—anyhow, this one guy had been laying up about four or five days for no good reason, and he knew so, and he met my dad that afternoon when he came in from the fields and my dad got out of the truck and started to walk to the time office, which was beside the commissary, and this guy was on the porch and there were about ten or twelve other people there, and the guy says, 'Well, Mr. Fisher, I guess you noticed I ain't been at work these last few days.' This guy went on talking, and all the time he was talking my dad was getting on those brass knucks. After a while of talking, this guy couldn't stand it, baiting my father, he had to see how the people behind him were taking it, and when he turned to see what they were thinking, about how they were taking his talking back to the boss man, he turned his head about forty-five degrees, and my dad clocked him behind the right ear and he went down. Frazier and Sweet—they were called yardmen but they were really just trouble-shooters, bodyguards, I guess you could say. Their job was to back my daddy up. Anyway, Frazier and Sweet helped my dad pick the man up and load him in the truck. My dad drove him into town to the doctor, and the doctor looked at him and told my dad the man was O.K., and my daddy said, 'This man has given me a hard time, and I need for you to keep him a couple of days, so that he can be a kind of example.' So the doctor smiled and said, 'All right, Mr. Ange, I'll keep him here.' A couple of days later, he called and said, 'You can pick up that man now,' and when my dad saw him the man had lost six or eight pounds and my dad said, 'What happened?' The doctor said, 'We had him on a little soup-and-castor-oil diet.' It probably didn't hurt the man none, but it impressed on him how bad that encounter was. I guess Dad kind of got his respect around the back door. Up until then, all I had seen was an imaginary world, which was the camp that I lived in. The only time I encountered the real world was that time. I shouldn't have been there, and if my daddy had known he was going to have trouble I wouldn't have been there."

THE means of determining how cutters are paid are secret and complicated, and deliberately obscured by the growers. It is known that a grower assigns to a cut row a value called the row price, and that a cutter is paid by the portion of the row he completes; that is, a cutter finishing

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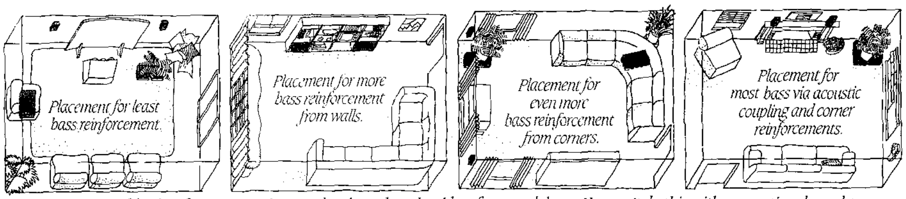
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half a cut row worth forty dollars earns twenty. Regardless of the value of the row, agreements made between the growers and the Department of Labor guarantee cutters an hourly wage. This figure is called the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, and is designed to protect wages in an area from the effects of importing workers.

Growers began not long ago to claim that they pay strictly by means of a measure called a task rate. Previously, they had said in their contracts that rates of pay would be determined by means of either a piece rate or a task rate. Some growers mentioned only a piece rate; others mentioned both. Those using both (none used only a task rate) made no distinction between them. In 1983, a federal district court in Washington laid out guidelines for employers who paid according to a piece rate. Among other things, the decision meant that employers using it would have to follow rules set by the Department of Labor and would be liable to have their pay practices monitored by the department in order for it to be sure the employers were complying. The next year, growers who had used "piece rate" in their contracts deleted it, substituting "task rate." The growers claimed that since they were paying by a task rate they were not subject to piece-rate standards imposed by the Department of Labor. The department didn't challenge them.

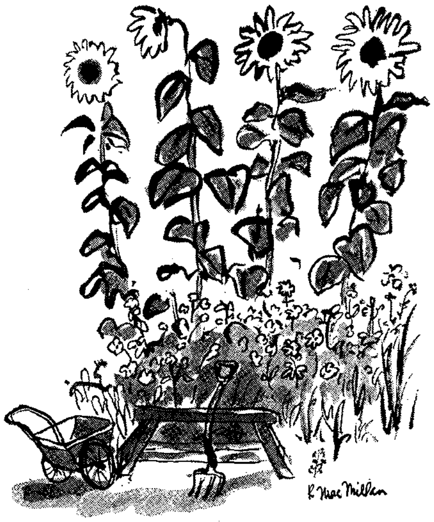
Various lawsuits brought on behalf of the cutters have lately forced growers to reveal a little about their methods of payment. Insofar as the growers are willing to be specific about how they pay cutters, they contend (in affidavits filed with the Department of Labor) that this is their formula for determining the value of a row: Adverse Effect Wage Rate times the hours required for the row to be cut by less productive workers equals the row price.

The determination of how many hours a row will require is the result, the growers say, of expert attention to the abilities of the cutters and the conditions of the fields. The misrepresentation this answer involves is arrived at by turning certain aspects of the truth inside out, and is not unresourceful. Cutters are in fact paid by means of a piece rate, the unit of payment being the ton. The actual formula for assigning value to a row begins with an estimate of how many tons the field it is part of contains. The grower derives from this figure the number of tons to a row. This amount he doubles to arrive at the number of tons to the cut row. The new figure he multiplies by the price per ton he has budgeted for harvest. Thus, a forty-ton field with—say, for the sake of simplicity—four tons to the row, eight to the cut row, times, say, three dollars and fifty cents a ton for harvest (a figure used by a grower in 1986-87) gives a row price of twenty-eight dollars.

Certain factors may cause the grower to revise this figure before issuing it. An insufficient burn leaves a field more difficult to cut. A thicker row is more work. Cane fallen over and tangled is harder to manage. A knife cutting cane with a stalk of high fibre or cutting in a field full of rocks must be sharpened more often. Work performed on a day following heavy rain, when the field is muddy and has water standing in it, proceeds slowly. If the grower wants to speed it up, he may increase the price.

A supervisor pricing a field is likely to visit it after the burn. If he is still uncertain about the estimate, he may talk to people who have worked closely on the field. He may go out first thing in the morning, in the dark, and circle it. He may walk into it and cut a few stalks and lay them in the truck bed and measure them. Or multiply the number of stalks in a stool by their heights; a stool containing eight stalks five feet high gives a forty-ton field.

A variation on the row price is paid for rows beside a canal or a road or at the edge of a field. These are called Charlie Frank rows—no one knows why, or whether it is a Jamaican or an American term. It has been in use for years. Charlie Frank rows bear more heavily, because they receive more light. Being on the outside of the field, they also burn less completely. Since the Charlie Frank rows are harder to cut and also require that the man cutting them drag his cane across to the pile of the man working beside him, they pay the most. Exactly how much depends on the grower. Some growers pay ten per cent more, some pay fifteen or twenty, and some pay a flat fee above the price of the rest of the rows in the field. If the field contains an even number of rows, the cutter will harvest the Charlie Frank row and the row beside it. In a field where the rows amount to an odd number, he will cut only the Charlie Frank row and be paid a bonus or the price of a cut row. Next to Charlie Frank is the coochie row. The Jamaicans say, "It sister to Charlie Frank and it have a lot of cane, but it pay no more."



Cane fields are mainly laid out on the grid except here and there where the shape of the land prevents it. A common variation is a field in the shape of a triangle. Each row then is priced at a portion of the longest row, or else by the foot. Cutters call this kind of field a rob angle, because it costs them the chance to make their full money.

A man on a smaller farm might do the arithmetic of the row price in his head or with a calculator. Larger growers often supply their supervisors with charts on which are written numbers of tons with corresponding prices. Some growers supply two rates—one for a field with no complications, and one that includes a bonus to be applied in consideration of the conditions of the field. Growers whose charts have no bonus rate take the variables of the field into account by other means. They consider a thirty-ton field with a poor burn and tangled cane as difficult to cut as, say, a thirty-five-ton field well burned and with straight cane, and apply the price from the heavier field.

Growers commonly overpay at the start of the season. The first fields cut are the oldest on the farm and the ones in the worst shape, the burns are less efficient, and the cutters are working themselves into form and need an incentive to improve. What the growers spend at the start of the harvest they recover as the season progresses. Row prices decline over the course of the harvest. By the end, cutters are working in fields of plant cane, their stamina is greater, their pace quicker, the burns are complete, and what may earlier have looked like a difficult field is something they now handle easily. Prices start high, decline to an average around the middle of the harvest, and fall by the end.

At the beginning of the season, an accomplished cutter may earn as much as seven dollars an hour. Because the number of tons in the field on which the row price is based is an estimate, the money paid for the harvest of the field may not agree with the row price. If a grower has estimated fewer tons in a field than are there, he has made money on the cutters. If he has estimated more, they have made money on him. "You put a cutter in a twenty-ton field you priced at thirty-five, and he is going to eat your lunch," a grower has said. How growers are able to hold to their budgets is by reviewing printouts from the mill that tell them the number of tons delivered from a field and the amount of sugar recovered. If they discover that they paid more for a field than they intended, they make adjustments on another to get it back. Some keep in mind fields that they know will be easy to cut, and hold them in reserve for a time when they need to get back some money. "When you get to a straight field, you try to get back the three to four per cent extra you paid for the tangled field," a grower has said. Some growers keep strictly to their price-per-ton figure and adjust their row prices daily; others stay as close to the figure as they can and shave here and there and check every week or two, or once a month, or every quarter of the season, to see how they are doing.

Some growers keep dropping their prices until someone, perhaps a leadman, comes to them and says the cutters are talking about a strike. Occasionally, when a cutter enters a field he will call out "What a row?" but usually cutters don't ask the price. They are concerned that if trouble develops over money they might be identified as having begun it.

In the interests of camp harmony, some growers, usually the smaller ones, will return to the cutters on one field the money they made from them on another. When they are giving money back, they want the cutters to know it. What they usually do is visit the field and make an announcement. They will practically rent a brass band. Some

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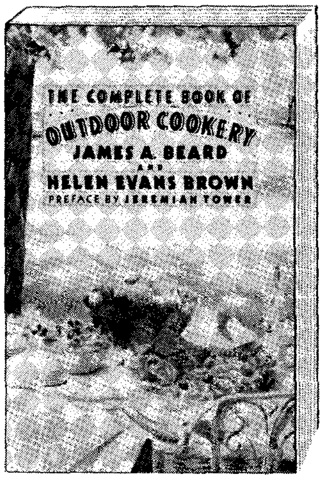

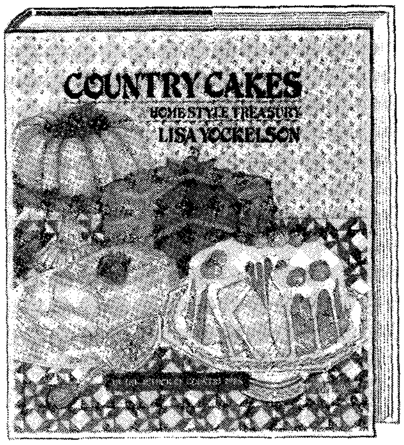

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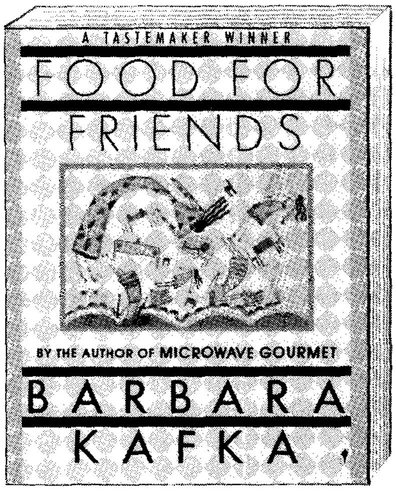

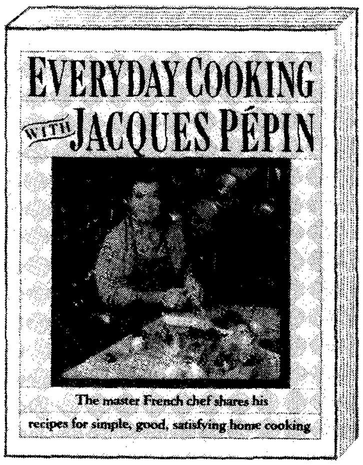
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growers will immediately correct a price if their cutters dispute it. They manage in this way to maintain the respect of their cutters, which they hope means they will get their cutters' best work, which is capital to draw on during periods of pressure. During training, some growers tell the men that they will not change a price once they make it. They say they might adjust it later on another field, but they won't change it for the field the cutters are in. They might give it back on another field. "If you let them see that you might be a double-minded person," a grower told me, "they'll really get to you."

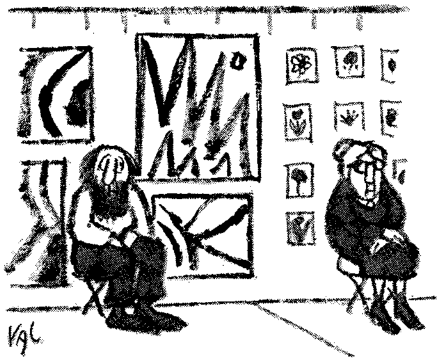
Two growers would not price a field the same, because each has budgeted a different figure per ton, which introduces an inequity: cutters have no say over where they are assigned; those who end up with growers whose price-per-ton figure is higher have already gained an advantage over the others.

How growers are able to be specific about the length of time a cutter will take to complete a row is by knowing exactly how many tons the cutter must harvest per hour in order to earn the Adverse Effect Wage Rate. This figure they derive by dividing their per-ton harvest figure into the wage rate. The grower budgeting three dollars and seventy-five cents a ton when the wage rate is five dollars and thirty cents knows that his cutters must account for one and forty-one hundredths tons an hour for the grower to stay on his harvest budget. From this figure growers can also determine how many feet a cutter must cover in an hour to earn the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, depending on the tonnage of the field. Some growers include this information on their charts. These distances are the production tasks the cutters must match in order to hold on to their jobs. Some growers measure off this distance in the field and mark it with a flag; pushers can then keep an eye on the progress of the cutters and urge ahead those who are lagging.

A cutter whose earnings fall short of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate is entitled to the difference between it and what his effort has brought him. This difference is called buildup. A cutter drawing buildup too regularly is likely to be fired. After the first of the year, few cutters draw buildup. Those who do are usually coming back from an injury.

It has been the practice of some growers to credit a cutter with fewer hours in the field than he has worked. Their ticket writers are instructed to divide the row price by the Adverse Effect Wage Rate and issue the corresponding hours—a maneuver that saves the growers a lot of money. Growers operating in this fashion can set row prices at levels so low that many cutters are unable to make the minimum; the grower then evades paying buildup by having his ticket writers doctor the hours. A man who takes eight hours to cut a thirty-six-dollar row is owed money by the grower. If the ticket writer reports that he cut it in six, the debt is erased. This practice is called matching hours, or shaving hours, or cooking hours. Cutters who exceed the task are issued extra hours in order not to throw off the scale. An accomplished cutter I know routinely receives nine and nine and a half hours on days when he has cut for only six.

In Jamaica, I interviewed a man who until he was not rehired for the harvest beginning in the fall of 1987 (he doesn't know why) had been a ticket writer for Okeelanta for seven seasons and a cutter for ten before that. He said that ticket writers referred to the process of matching hours to pay as balancing. How they knew to do it, he said, was that every ten days or every fortnight they would be summoned to a meeting at which they were not allowed to speak or ask questions and at which a supervisor would tell them that the amount of buildup the company was paying would have to be cut. He said that the ticket writers were never told to shave the hours but that it was understood among them that that was the intention of the meetings. It was also understood that ticket writers who did not coöperate would be put back on the knife or sent home. He said that when a cutter had fallen behind from sickness or fatigue or bad luck he would try to give him as many hours as he could without getting in trouble with the company, which practice, he said, was known among ticket writers as squeezing the hours.



A FAMOUS document in the recent history of sugarcane harvesting is the Sugarman Report. Solomon Sugarman was a wage-and-hour analyst with the Department of Labor when he came to Florida in 1973 to examine the wage and record-keeping practices of the sugarcane industry. The Department of Labor was interested in knowing whether the proper wage was being paid to the cutters and whether the hours reported for the piecework were accurate. Sugarman and his crew stayed four days and visited four growers: the Atlantic Sugar Association, the Sugar Cane Growers Coöperative, the United States Sugar Corporation, and Gulf & Western, Inc., which has since sold its interest to a family from Cuba named Fanjul. Sugarman selected those growers because among them they employed three-quarters of the cutters. At two companies—U.S. Sugar and the Sugar Cane Growers Coöperative—he found that cutters were counted as having begun work half an hour after getting off the bus, were docked half an hour for lunch whether they took it or not (Sugarman noticed that if the cutters took lunch breaks at all they were no longer than fifteen minutes, and sometimes as short as five), and had their quitting times rounded back to the last full hour they were in the field; that is, a cutter quitting at three-fifty-five was said to have stopped at three. Sugarman decided that this cost the cutters an hour and a half a day (although in order to avoid charges of unfairness in his minimum-wage study he reduced this figure to an hour). At one company—Atlantic—he found that the ticket writers recorded whatever hours were necessary to satisfy the minimum-wage requirements. The day Sugarman's team was there, Atlantic recorded cutters' hours in half-hour increments. Reviewing the master payroll list, Sugarman found that none of the half-hour increments had been entered. He also discovered in checking past records that ticket writers had recorded the increments that day only, and concluded they had done so on instructions from the company, because of the survey. While his team was in the field watching a row being cut, word came from the offices that the row price was to be raised to thirty dollars from twenty-four. Sugarman concluded that the company had instructed its timekeepers to record hours accurately as long as Sugarman was around, and then had realized that this would show that they weren't paying the minimum wage, so had hustled out to the field to raise the price. Sugarman learned from the company's records that Atlantic generally paid row prices of twenty, twenty-three, twenty-four, and twenty-six dollars. At the Sugar Cane Growers Coöperative, he found that hours were issued on the basis of satisfaction of the task; every person cutting a quarter row, that is, received the same number of hours. When I called to ask about the survey, he told me that at one company, which he wouldn't name, he had found three ticket writers asleep on a bus.

Sugarman's findings regarding the minimum wage (he discovered violations at all the companies except Gulf & Western) were eventually discredited by the industry. The regulations the growers were expected to satisfy in terms of pay were to be met over a fortnight, and Sugarman's visits of several days to each company were not long enough to be conclusive. The incontrovertible value of Sugarman's study was that it documented the shaving of hours. An irony of the report is that no violations were discovered at Gulf & Western. Under the Fanjul family, the company, of all growers, has been the most consistently criticized by cutters for the stealing of hours.

Caveman had the idea that we might find his friend from Barbados in a bar in Harlem, so we parked one afternoon in a gravel lot outside a squat brick building with a flat roof and no windows and walked past two guys leaning against a car who stared hard at me (later I learned from Caveman that they had concluded I was a cop), and I followed him through the door. When my eyes adjusted, I could see that there were two pool tables in front of me and a small dance floor and a sign on the wall that said "Positively No Gambling Allowed at Pool Tables or in Rest Rooms," and across the room a bar with a mirror behind it reflecting all the liquor bottles and the faces of the men at the bar and

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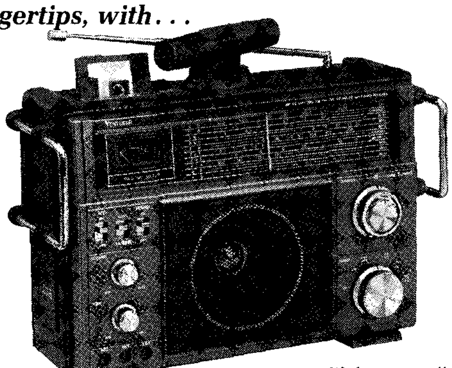

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the back of a tall, stately woman handing over setups and filling plastic cups almost to the top with liquor. Caveman went up to a man leaning on the bar and tapped his shoulder. The man turned around and Caveman said something and I think the man must have misunderstood because he said, "How much are you paying?" Caveman shook his head and found another man, farther down the bar. The first man followed him, asking how much work there was, and Caveman had to wave him off. After Caveman had said a few words to the other man, he turned to me and said, "Here." The man was obviously an American. He said that he had cut cane about fifteen years ago, but no more. He said he had been a fast cutter and had made some money. While Caveman watched the pool players, the man talked, but it was hard for me to hear him because of the noise in the bar and because he kept lowering his head and speaking to the floor. The only part I made out clearly was when he looked at me and said, "And I'll tell you one more thing . . ." After I had been listening to him for a couple of minutes, I became aware that a sombre-looking young man wearing dark clothes, a felt hat, and a black leather jacket was watching me. In a few moments, he came up and said, "When you finish, I want to talk to you." Then he walked away; I didn't see where. The man I had been listening to asked if I had any more questions and I said I didn't and he went back to the bar. Caveman and I left. On the way to the car, the guy who had said he wanted to talk to me stepped up and blocked my way. He said, "You want to read a master's thesis I wrote on the Vital Link?" Caveman grabbed my arm and said, "Let's get out of here." In the car, he said that the man who had just spoken to me had a good education but was a rockhead, a junkie. Caveman asked if I had understood the man in the bar, and I said that I hadn't. Caveman said, "Well, now, he was telling you something."

—ALEC WILKINSON

(This is the first part of a two-part article.)

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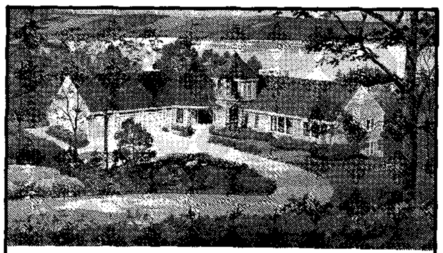

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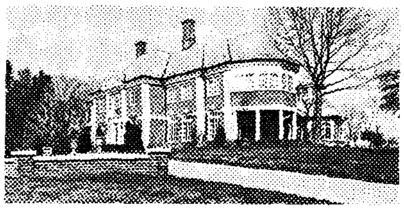

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JAZZ

Max

Max Gordon had reached the great age of eighty-six when he died, in May. He was still at the helm of his beloved Village Vanguard, which, at fifty-five, is probably the oldest night club in the world. Standing row upon row in the sizable space of his past were the performers whose careers he had started or furthered—an extraordinary group, which includes Woody Allen, Pearl Bailey, Bobby Short, Wally Cox, Comden and Green, Leadbelly, Nichols and May, Harry Belafonte, Judy Holliday, Barbra Streisand, Mort Sahl, Mildred Bailey, Lenny Bruce, the Weavers, Carol Sloane, Aretha Franklin, Josh White, and almost every jazz musician from Zutty Singleton to Albert Ayler.

Max emigrated twice to get to New York. He was brought to this country from Svir, Lithuania, in 1908, and in 1926 he moved to New York from Portland, Oregon, where his family settled. E. B. White suggested once that there are three types of New Yorkers—commuters, the native-born, and settlers from elsewhere. The settlers, he said, account for "New York's high-strung disposition, its poetical deportment, its dedication to the arts, and its incomparable achievements." Max would have been surprised if he had been told that he shared responsibility for any of these traits, but he would also have been pleased. Compliments fell on him like rain on grass: his only reaction was to continue to flourish.

Max backed into his life. He came to New York to study law at Columbia, but he lasted only six weeks. Greenwich Village was full of poets and writers and painters, and, drawn by its ferment, he took a furnished room near Washington Square. Max's Village was made up of writers and vagabonds like Harry Kemp, Maxwell Bodenheim, Joe Gould, and John Rose Gildea—not the tony group that included Edmund Wilson, Elinor Wylie, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and E. E. Cummings. Kemp, who was big, loved Max, who was small. "Kemp lived on the dunes at Provincetown," Max said one day, "and he helped start the Provincetown Playhouse. When he came back to town, he'd look for me in the coffeehouses and he'd shout, 'Max! Where are you? I have a new poem to read to you!' and crush me with an embrace."

For five years, Max worked at odd jobs, read at the Public Library, and hung out with the poets at the coffeehouses. In 1932, at the insistence of a friend named Ann Andreas, he opened his own place, the Village Fair Coffee House, on Sullivan Street. The poets came to drink, and declaim their poetry, but the club lasted only a year. ("Unbeknownst to me, one of the waitresses got caught trying to sell liquor to a cop in plainclothes, so they put a cop on the premises every night, and there he sat in his uniform, and it put a pall on the place," Max explained.) In 1934, Max opened another place, on Charles Street, and called it the Village Vanguard, for a reason that he could never remember. In February of 1935, he moved a couple of blocks north, without skipping a night's work, to the Vanguard's present site, on Seventh Avenue between Eleventh Street and Waverly Place.

No architect would design a place like the Vanguard, which, in its accidental way, is a perfect union of form and content. A pie-shaped basement some sixty feet long, it has a small bandstand at its south end, or apex, and a small bar at the other end. A passageway behind the bar leads to a disused kitchen, which became Max's office, a dressing room, and a gathering place for jazz musicians. The walls of the main room were once covered with murals and are now covered largely with photographs. When someone asked Max who decorated the Vanguard, he replied, "It decorated itself." Max was married and had two daughters, but, in truth, he was married to the Vanguard. He once said, "This place has been like a love match to me. I've probably spent more time in it than anywhere else. I've even slept here, stretched out on a couple of tables. I've learned that if you're good to the Vanguard, the Vanguard will be good to you." He often spoke of the place as if it were flesh and blood. "The Vanguard has a life of its own. It's nice to people. It doesn't push them around. It doesn't make them feel it's trying to inveigle them into more drinks. It doesn't hustle. If people want a drink, they get it. If they don't, they don't." Max was revered by the people who worked for him, and although he had a sharp ear and eye, he never tried to shape his performers. If they met expectations, they were asked back. He said, in a resigned way, "I never got to know a lot of the people who appeared

"As a woman, you're unparalleled."

at the Vanguard. Maybe they were scared of me, maybe I was scared of them. Maybe they were like John Coltrane, who was always surrounded by worshippers. I loved his music, but I never said four words to him."

The Vanguard was not Max's only invention. From 1943 to 1963, he was a co-owner, with Herbert Jacoby, of the Blue Angel, on East Fifty-fifth Street. It was the first consummate New York supper club. (It became more than that: a performer who had appeared at the Blue Angel could get a job in any night club in the country.) Jacoby was a supercilious Frenchman who had started out in the Paris *boîtes*, and Max was, in his own cheerful estimation, a Village bumpkin. Once Max got his bearings in the rarefied atmosphere that Jacoby moved in, the two got on well enough, and eventually worked out a smooth system. They tried out new acts at the Vanguard and, if they went over, shipped them to the Blue Angel. Max often claimed he was not a businessman; what he really meant was he wasn't greedy. Whatever profits he made were the result of offering a pure product in decent surroundings at a reasonable price. Ambition got the better of him only twice, with disastrous consequences. In the late forties, he and Jacoby bought the faltering Café Society Uptown from Barney Josephson and, at enormous expense, converted it into the posh Le Directoire. After a deceptive early success, it foundered, and they sold it back to Josephson, for five thousand dollars. In 1955, Max and Michael Field, the cookbook writer and classical pianist, opened a fancy ice-cream parlor, Maxfield's, near the Paris Theatre, on West Fifty-eighth Street. It had tile floors, marble counters, red velvet walls, brass chandeliers, homemade ice cream made with cream, and coffee brewed every twenty minutes. The Bergdorf's crowd found it outrageously expensive, and the after-theatre crowd stayed away because it didn't have a liquor license.

In the early sixties, the Vanguard, long neglected for Max's uptown interests, nearly went under. Max had to sell his car and his house on Fire Island. He borrowed ten thousand dollars ("One of the axioms of the night-club business is you have to have somebody to lean on for money") and, by dint of shrewd booking (quality jazz acts that might become popular; popular jazz acts that had quality), pulled the Vanguard through. Max was of two minds about money. He knew it was essential, but he also knew how ephemeral it was—which is probably what made him carry a comforting roll of bills, bills that fluttered like leaves onto the table and the floor when he pulled them out of his pocket to pay a restaurant check.

In the early seventies, he moved back to the Village from the Upper East Side, and after that his life became simpler. He lived in a small apartment on lower Fifth Avenue, and he ate dinner at Joe's, on MacDougal Street, or at Pirandello, just east of Washington Square. He went to the Vanguard twice a day—in the afternoon to do his booking, take reservations, and replenish his stock, and in the evening to watch the cash register, talk to friends, and listen to the music. He'd sit at his desk in the back or at a table near the door: an owlish man with receding white hair, heavy-rimmed glasses, and a big cigar. Clothes puzzled Max. For much of the year, he wore a chamois shirt, open at the neck, a corduroy suit, and, when he went out, a shapeless black hat, pulled so low that only tendrils of white hair showed. He liked to talk, in his casual, enunciatory way ("I feel all right. I feel pretty gude"), and he loved to laugh. At a memorial service for Max, Katy Abel, the Vanguard's longtime doorkeeper, reported that once two men appeared at the top of the steps leading down to the club and started fencing with loaves of French bread. She asked Max what to do, and he looked up the stairs and said, "Ask them if they want some butter."

In a nonchalant way, Max eventually began to take himself as seriously as he took the Vanguard. In 1980, he published a memoir, "Live at the Village Vanguard." He wrote it himself, page by page, over a period of seven years, and it is a funny, literate book. Here is his caption for a photograph of the singer Betty Carter at the Vanguard: "I happened to walk in on her last show. It was late, it was February, the snow was on the ground; there was nobody in the joint. And there she was, singing to a lot of empty chairs and tables. I could never get that picture

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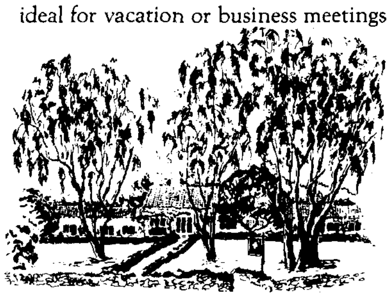

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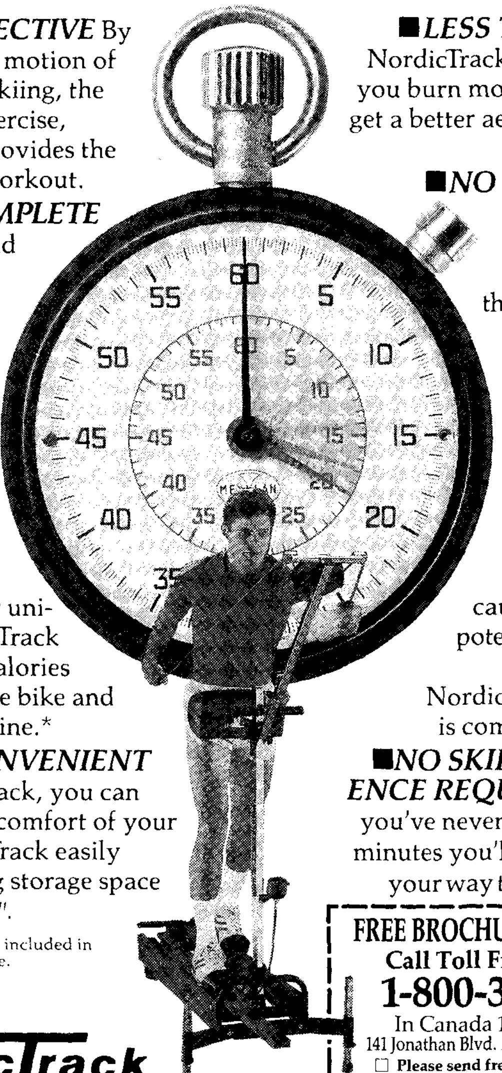
out of my mind. She used to come around, looking for work. 'Let's wait and see,' I'd say. Then finally she said, 'You should hear me again, hear me somewhere else, hear me in a place other than the Vanguard.' So I went all the way up to Harlem to hear her at a place called Wells's. I heard her and put her to work. And today she's Betty Bebop, the greatest bebop singer of them all. And do you know what? I can't afford her anymore; she now sings in arenas and does concerts in college gymnasiums. But she comes down to see me. We sit in the kitchen and talk." He kept a pile of his books at the Vanguard, and he estimated he had sold two thousand copies. This is what he said about the techniques he used in the book: "I kept trying to find a way to get my ideas across, and I hit on dialogues, sometimes with real people, sometimes with people based on real people. Some of the dialogues are fictional, but it's fiction borrowed directly from life. Life fiction, you might call it."

MAX was the last of the old-style New York jazz-club owners, who not only operated honest places but loved the music. Others, down through the years, have included Nick Rongetti (Nick's), Jimmy Ryan and Matty Walsh (Jimmy Ryans), Barney Josephson (Café Society Downtown and Café Society Uptown, the Cookery), Ralph Watkins (Kelly's Stable, Basin Street East, the Embers), Art D'Lugoff (the Village Gate), the Canterinos (the Half Note), the Termini brothers (the Five Spot), Gil Wiest (Michael's Pub), and Bradley Cunningham (Bradley's). Josephson, who ran the Café Societies from 1938 to 1948 and the Cookery from 1971 to 1982, died last September, and Cunningham, who opened Bradley's in 1969, died in November. Barney, Bradley, and Max lived and worked within a three- or four-block area, but they didn't commingle much. Max sometimes ate dinner at Bradley's (Bradley was rarely there that early), and Bradley would turn up at the Vanguard when Max celebrated an anniversary of some sort. Barney, a stylish, elegant man, tended to stay on his own turf. They were of a kind in their different, rebel ways. New Yorkers aren't heavy mourners, but they have long memories.

—WHITNEY BALLIETT



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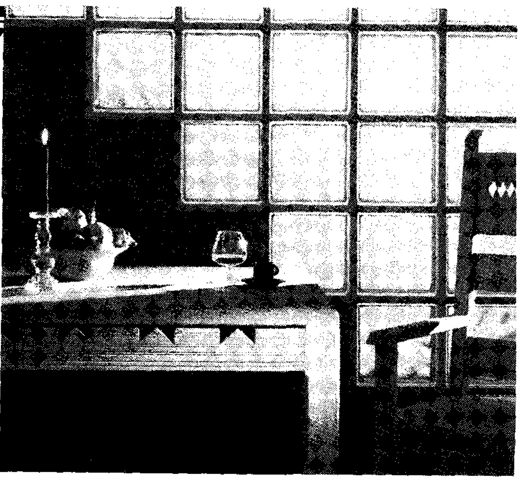


REPORT FROM CAMBODIA

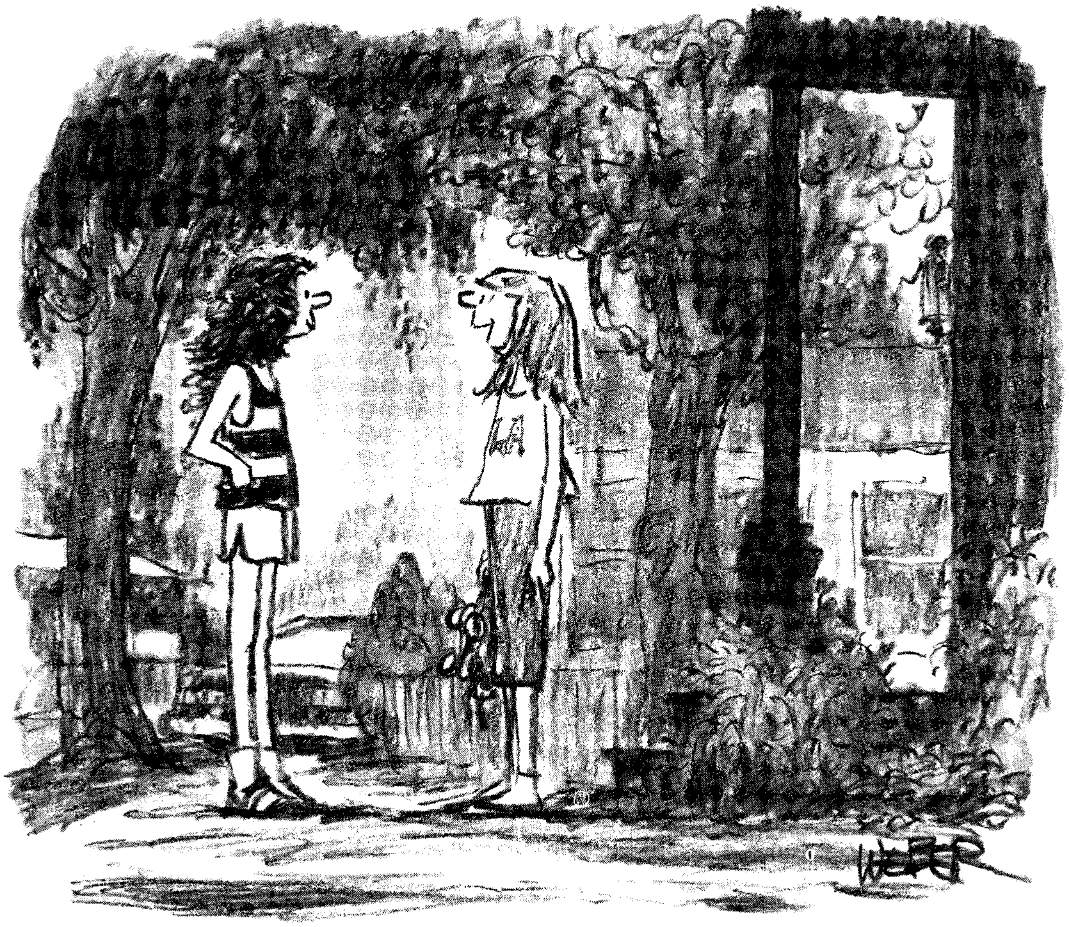
THE TIGER AND THE CROCODILE

On a meander of the Mekong flowing southward out of Laos, where the river merges with the Bassac River and the waters of the Tonle Sap, lies the capital of Cambodia, Phnom Penh. It is still a sleepy, Joseph Conrad river port. Children swim in the stream, shacks of grass and bamboo crowd the banks. Dilapidated riverboats carry passengers, livestock, and vegetables to outlying towns. The city moves at a slower, more relaxed pace than does Ho Chi Minh City, as Saigon is now called, and seems to belong in a different century from that of Bangkok or Singapore. It's as if Phnom Penh had been frozen in time. There are no tall buildings on the skyline, no modern hotels, and only a handful of visitors—mostly from the Eastern bloc. Office workers still scratch away on paper forms and worn carbons, though their counterparts elsewhere in Southeast Asia long ago moved into the computer age.

In 1975, Phnom Penh was all but abandoned when the Khmer Rouge, under Pol Pot, captured the city and drove its people—who numbered approximately two million—out into the countryside. Pol Pot's reign of terror lasted four years and resulted in the death of more than a million Cambodians. Other cities in the twentieth century have been bombed and obliterated, but none were drained of their citizenry the way Phnom Penh was. Cambodians didn't begin coming back into the city in any number until the late seventies, when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and drove the Khmer Rouge into Thailand. Today, Phnom Penh has a population of about a million. But there is still a sense of impermanence, as if it were a city of impoverished transients. The Vietnamese landlords are supposed to be gone by the end of September, and the Cambodians won't feel like masters in their own country until all the Vietnamese have left.

I had been in Phnom Penh in April, 1975, when the Khmer Rouge were about to descend on the city. At the few foreign embassies that remained open, officials were hastily packing and were burning papers in the courtyards. Desultory rocket attacks killed people in twos and threes throughout the city. The front lines were only a few miles from the city center and were moving closer. Within the shrinking perimeter, French restaurants still served first-class meals, while children starved in the streets. The more corrupt politicians and generals had already gone. The mystical president, Lon Nol, who once ordered magic sand to be sprinkled from helicopters around the city to protect its defenses, had flown to Hawaii. A strange lethargy seemed to have fallen over Phnom Penh.

I returned in January of this year for the celebrations surrounding the tenth anniversary of the country's "liberation" from the Khmer Rouge. The red-and-yellow flags of the People's Republic of Kampuchea flew from every building and at every street corner. (In the last twenty years, Cambodia has had five names and five flags. Until 1970, when its ruler, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was overthrown, the country was known as the Kingdom of Cambodia. Then, under General Lon Nol, it became the Khmer Republic. Under Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, it became Democratic Kampuchea. And under Heng Samrin and Hun Sen, the Party Secretary and the Prime Minister, respectively, installed by the Vietnamese, it became the People's Republic of Kampuchea. This May, in an effort to foster a climate of "national and political reconciliation," Hun Sen announced that the country would henceforth be called the State of Cambodia.) Brand-new Russian jeeps were put at the disposal of foreign guests, and the ho-



"Today I got my first bill."

tels were full. All officials dealing with foreigners had been given money to buy new shirts. New traffic lights had been installed. Residents told me that war amputees, call girls, and beggars had been rounded up and banished for the duration of the festivities. Swarms of bicycles, motorbikes, and even some new-model cars filled the streets, and traffic was heavier than it had ever been in prewar days. The markets were open and crowded. There were no longer any French restaurants, but French wines, Scotch whiskey, Russian caviar, and Japanese stereos were on sale in the markets, giving an illusion of normality, even of the beginnings of prosperity. Beneath the new coats of paint, however, Phnom Penh and its people seemed worn down, exhausted, and often sick. The wide avenues that the French had laid out in colonial times were dusty and cracked. There were holes in the soaring yellow roofs of the royal palace, and trash was piled in the side streets and back alleys.

A bridge over the Mekong was still missing a center span. Communist guerrillas blew it up seventeen years ago, and it had never been repaired. The rusting hulk of a Philippine freighter lay beached on the riverbank across from the palace. It had been part of a fleet of aging coasters that ran the gantlet of fire all the way up from the South China Sea in the early nineteen-seventies, trying to keep the American-backed regime in Phnom Penh alive. Little has been done to repair the city's water system, which, according to Western experts, is one of the world's most polluted and is a constant source of disease. Though ten years have passed since the Khmer Rouge were forced out, the water pipes and sewage pipes are still broken and leaking into each other. It is a measure of the horror in which Cambodians hold their recent past that they will tell you, in all seriousness, that the real reason for the pollution is that the dead bodies from the Pol Pot era have contaminated Cambodia's water table.

Cyclos, the bicycle rickshaws of Indo-China, are still the best way to get around in Phnom Penh. Cyclo drivers like to take you to see the abandoned compounds where the Vietnamese military and civilian advisers used to live. They take you past the Department of Fisheries, which used to be the United States Embassy. They also like to show you Phnom Penh's most modern building—a Soviet satellite-communications station that stands where the French cathedral once stood. In a paroxysm of rage against God, Mammon, and everything foreign, the Khmer Rouge blew up the Central Bank, abolished money, and destroyed the cathedral, obliterating all traces of it. "Before, people came here to talk to God," a Cambodian friend remarked to me. "Now people come to talk to Russia." (After the Vietnamese took over the country, in 1979, the Soviet Union replaced China as Cambodia's big-power benefactor.)

Because Cambodia is recognized only by Soviet-bloc countries and by India, the Liberation Day gathering seemed more like a socialist-club conference than like a truly international celebration. Bemused but amiable villagers were trucked into the capital to line the parades, and stood docilely in the sun while Army units and innumerable floats representing agriculture, industry, and the glories of socialism passed in review. I saw it all from the same street corner I had stood on twenty years ago, watching floats and marchers glorifying "Sihanoukism." But this time heavily armed battalions had been moved into place outside the city, to prevent a Khmer Rouge guerrilla attack from embarrassing the government during the ceremonies. All traffic in and out of the city was halted and inspected.

After the parades, a ballet depicting Cambodia's long history of invasion and betrayal was performed for foreign guests. The final sequence, portraying the liberation from the Khmer Rouge, gave noticeably little credit to the Vietnamese; and the general secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Nguyen Van Linh, who was in the audience, was overheard to complain about the slight. For the Cambodians, however, who are sensitive about their country's complicated relations with Vietnam, the ballet was about their ability to survive against adversity and foreign domination. The Vietnamese were greeted as liberators when they arrived, but, like many liberators who stay too long, they were soon resented. With their occupation condemned by most of the world, and their Army bogged down fighting elusive guerrillas, the Vietnamese had, ironically, found themselves repeating the Ameri-

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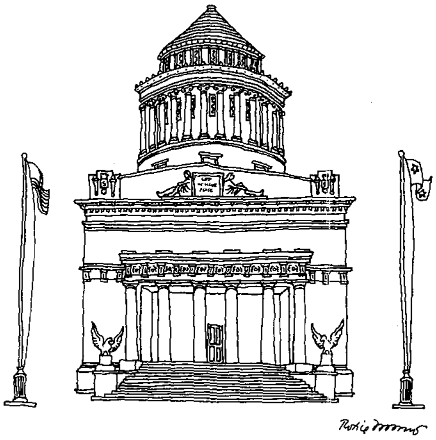
can experience in Southeast Asia, and now they are preparing their Cambodian clients to stand on their own. "We know the Cambodians are sick of our telling them what to do," a Vietnamese diplomat said to me. "But when we arrived there were too few of them left who had any education or experience in running the country. Now we think they can, and we are leaving."

"CAUGHT between the tiger and the crocodile" is a phrase you hear often in Cambodia. It comes from an ancient Khmer prophecy that the Khmer race would someday have to choose between being eaten by a tiger and being eaten by a crocodile. Today, the country must decide whether to trust the government in Phnom Penh, which is backed by the Vietnamese, or the resistance, which is dominated by the Khmer Rouge. "The Khmer Rouge say we are the creatures of foreigners—Cambodian bodies with Vietnamese heads," I was told by Men Saman, a foreign-office official who was serving as my guide. "But it is the Chinese who arm the Khmer Rouge, and the Thais who allow them to stay in Thailand." He shrugged.

The thread that has linked all Cambodian leaders is the fear that the Khmer people and their civilization are doomed to disappear, squeezed between two stronger, predatory powers. From the ninth century to the thirteenth, a great Khmer empire spread from the South China Sea to the Laotian uplands, but in time it weakened as two aggressive peoples, the Thais and the Vietnamese, began moving southward out of China. Threatened, like the Poles, from both the east and the west, the Khmer spent the next several centuries trying to hold on to their independence and their civilization. Only the coming of the French, in 1863, halted the advance of the Vietnamese and the Thais. When French power waned, the process of encroachment began again. In 1953, Sihanouk convinced the French that he would be easier to deal with than the Cambodian left, and persuaded them to grant independence to Cambodia. Over the next two decades, he kept his country out of war by means of an international juggling act that had all the powers in Indo-China—the North Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese, the Thais, the Chinese, and the Americans—off balance. Nevertheless, the South Vietnamese ("eaters of Khmer earth," Sihanouk called them) made frequent incursions into Cambodian territory and encouraged right-wing resistance groups such as the Khmer Serei (Free Khmers), while the North Vietnamese were encouraging the then feeble left-wing guerrillas the Khmer Rouge.

Sihanouk broke off diplomatic relations with the United States in 1965, when American military activity in Indo-China increased, but he began a diplomatic flirtation with Washington when he thought he could use American influence to counterbalance the Communist forces in North and South Vietnam. He also sought out China as a protector, and tried to maintain close ties with France as well. When it became obvious that there was little he could do to stop the North Vietnamese from using Cambodian sanctuaries, he granted them permission, and then secretly told the Americans he would look the other way if the sanctuaries were bombed. He employed similar tactics in domestic politics, but with less success, and finally, in March, 1970, he was pulled down by the Army and the urban middle class, in a coup led by General Lon Nol and the Prince's cousin Sirik Matak. Sihanouk immediately denounced Lon Nol as a traitor, set up shop in Beijing, and threw his support behind the Khmer Rouge. He has since continued his juggling. He first distanced himself from the Khmer Rouge after their victory, then joined them in an anti-Vietnamese coalition. In May, he hinted that he might be willing to make a deal with the Phnom Penh government, but by early July he was denying that he would make a separate peace.

After the 1970 coup, Lon Nol threw his lot in with the Americans, and Cambodia was soon engulfed in a war in which it suffered some of the heaviest aerial bombing in the history of warfare. At first, the Lon Nol government found itself fighting the North Vietnamese Army, but by 1973 the indigenous Khmer Rouge had taken over from the Vietnamese, and a brutal, no-quarter struggle followed. In 1975, when Saigon fell and the Americans left Indo-China, the Khmer Rouge took over Cambodia and began border raids against the Vietnamese, their erstwhile sponsors. The Vietnamese responded by overrunning Cambodia, and by 1979 the Vietnamese-dominated Communist Party of Indo-China seemed to have fulfilled its fifty-year dream of controlling all the former French colonies in Southeast Asia. Cambodia's age-old fear of being swallowed had been realized.



THE Cambodians whom the Vietnamese installed in power in 1979 were, for the most part, former Khmer Rouge who had defected either in revulsion against the Pol Pot excesses or to save themselves from purges, and though they were completely dependent on the Vietnamese, they nonetheless tried to protect what was left of their shattered culture. When the Vietnamese attempted to interest the Cambodians in Soviet ballet, for example, the Cambodians ignored them and, instead, revived the delicate traditional Khmer dancing, which the Khmer Rouge had suppressed. (During the Pol Pot period, most of Cambodia's dancers and musicians had been classified as "bourgeois counter-revolutionaries" and had been killed or had died. The few who survived are trying to teach the young an all but lost art.) Under Pol Pot, religion was also banned, and Buddhist monks were put to death. Although the Vietnamese permitted some pagodas to reopen, they limited the number of monks in the country (no one younger than fifty-five was allowed to be a monk) and the number of feast days; and the government tried to inject propaganda into religious sermons. These restrictions are now being lifted, and last January, in a surprising turnabout, Prime Minister Hun Sen made a public apology to the monks for his government's past mistakes. In April, he restored Buddhism as the state religion. One of the more bizarre practices of the Pol Pot government was mass-marriage cer-

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emonies, in which people were forced to take husbands or wives they might never even have seen before. Many of these marriages did not survive, but the couples who stayed together are now sanctifying their marriages in Buddhist ceremonies, often with their children in attendance.

Only a few years ago, the Phnom Penh government was condemned by Amnesty International for brutality and torture. It is still not a model as far as human rights are concerned, but both Cambodians and foreign residents say that people are less afraid, more open. Until April, for example, there was a ten-to-dawn curfew in Phnom Penh, and people were sometimes shot for acting suspiciously after hours. Now the curfew has been relaxed, and discos have started to appear. "The government has got much less repressive lately," a Khmer-speaking foreigner told me, "but what will happen if security deteriorates after the Vietnamese leave is anyone's guess."

In May, Hun Sen announced that in addition to renaming the country and restoring Buddhism his government was amending the constitution, to abolish the death penalty and to reinstate private ownership. These were moves to promote "national and political reconciliation," the Prime Minister said. Vietnamese-style Communism is becoming unrecognizable in Cambodia. But although Hun Sen is willing to acknowledge Norodom Sihanouk as chief of state, and has redesigned the national flag to make it more resemble Sihanouk's flag, there is no indication yet that he is ready to surrender power.

As recently as a year ago, the Cambodian Army was considered hopeless, and military experts said that the Khmer Rouge would cut it to pieces once the Vietnamese withdrew. Today, there are about fifty thousand Vietnamese troops left in the country, down from two hundred thousand in 1985, and there is a new confidence that the regime will be able to fend for itself after the rest have departed. "This is not Afghanistan," Khieu Kanharith, the editor of the semi-official weekly *Kampuchea*, said to me, and he explained that, unlike the Mujahideen, the Khmer Rouge do not have wide support from the population. Khmer Rouge guerrillas still roam the countryside ambushing and attacking villages, but only in small units. After a decade of struggle, they have no liber-

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ated zones inside Cambodia—only camps in Thailand provided for them by the Thai government. "When you feel surrounded by hostile elements both within and without, you can have a kind of paranoia," Khieu Kanharith said. "But after ten years the government here feels more confident, and so it allows more freedom to the people."

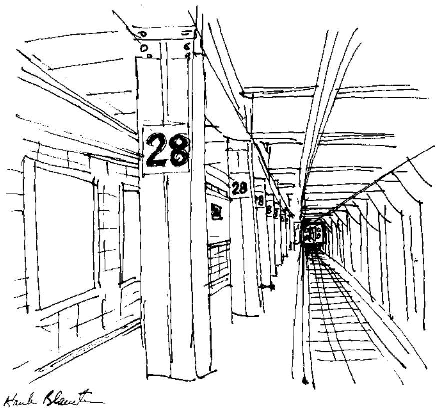
There have also been stirrings of economic energy. New money is flowing in. Foreign investment is being sought. And, as in so many Communist countries, a market economy is replacing a state-controlled one. Khieu Kanharith said that the liberalization policy began in 1986, with the government's placing more emphasis on the private sector. Even before this year's constitutional amendments, city dwellers could own their apartments, and farmers were allowed to inherit land. Farmers are no longer required to sell their rice to the state, and the government must therefore pay more to the farmers for the rice it buys.

François Grunewald, a French agronomist who does a lot of travelling in the Cambodian countryside, told me that for the first time in ten years peasants are planting sugar-palm trees. Because it takes from ten to twelve years for a sugar palm to mature, Grunewald sees the planting as a sign that the peasants have enough confidence in the government and in their own tenure on the land to plan for the future. "I think that what you are seeing here is a transition between the extreme Stalinism of the Khmer Rouge and the new, pragmatic socialism of Mikhail Gorbachev," he told me. "Today, everyone is talking about getting richer." The danger, in Grunewald's view, is that, with a market economy, rural debt is on the rise, and the sort of class division between city and countryside which brought the Khmer Rouge into being is likely to recur.

The government has long tolerated a well-organized black-market trade across the Thai border, but in the past few months smuggling has become more sophisticated. Better medicine can be found in the markets than in the hospitals. There are more new cars on the streets of Phnom Penh than in any Vietnamese town, and the city has been overrun by a swarm of brand-new motorbikes, which have emerged like locusts after a drought. "It's not black market, it's free market," Prime Minister Hun Sen recently told an interviewer. "To strengthen our power, we must strengthen the economy."

Where is the money coming from? Overseas Cambodians are sending money home, I was told. Chinese business interests in Thailand, Singapore, and Hong Kong are beginning to invest. The banks have deregulated the exchange rate, and the official rate and the black-market rate are now close enough so that overseas investors need not be discouraged from using the banks. (Cambodians in the United States and elsewhere are slow to trust the banks, however, and still give their cash to money carriers, who bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars and usually take between twenty and thirty per cent—when they are not stealing all of it.) A good example of the new economic activity is what is happening to the Cambodiana Hotel, which was originally a dream of Prince Sihanouk's. Planned as Phnom Penh's first modern hotel, the Cambodiana started going up, on a splendid riverside site, in the nineteen-sixties, but construction stopped when Sihanouk was overthrown, and the building, a windowless shell, became a haven for refugees—they cooked on the floors and hung their washing in what was to have been the grand lobby. Now a group of Hong Kong Chinese and overseas Cambodian interests is preparing to finish the hotel, in anticipation of an end to the civil war and the return of big-time tourism.

Along with restructuring the economy, the government has become more relaxed about foreign influences. More foreign books and films are being allowed into the country, and many others are smuggled in. The videocassette has become the bane of film censorship, and entrepreneurs all over Phnom Penh have set aside rooms in their houses for video theatres. One film that the government has made no attempt to censor is David Puttnam's "The Killing Fields," which vividly portrays the bestiality of the Khmer Rouge. The government has also dropped its restrictions on foreign-language instruction. Until 1985, the teaching of "capitalist" languages was not permitted, and in Pol Pot's time knowledge of a foreign language was enough to provoke suspicion, torture, and even death. Today, capitalist-language lessons are allowed, and, much to the chagrin of the French, whose language used to predominate among educated Cambodians, English lessons are by far the most popular. On a road nicknamed London Street are rows of little schools set up in private houses with signs advertising "English Book Number One" or, for those in a hurry, "Streamline English."



English is the common language of the relief and humanitarian agencies—the International Committee of the Red Cross, World Vision, the Alliance Française, Oxfam, the Mennonite Central Committee, Australian Catholic Relief, Lutheran World Relief, Japan International Volunteer Center, and various agencies of the United Nations. There are approximately two hundred foreigners, from several countries, living in Phnom Penh and working for such organizations. Many of them live in the drafty old Hôtel Royal, now called the Samaki (Solidarity), where many of us correspondents stayed during the seventies, and they inhabit what is virtually a closed world. Most of them must stay within the city limits, and their contacts with Cambodians are restricted. If they want to go up-country on a field trip, they have to go through the laborious process of getting permission from the appropriate bureaucracies. There are no Western restaurants, and because of the appalling state of hygiene there are constant health hazards. Last year, for example, Robyn Blake, of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, was evacuated to Singapore with a rare strain of typhus.

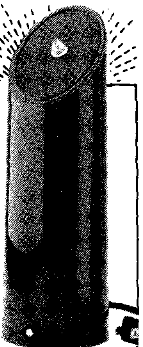
There are no Western newspapers or magazines for sale, and there is no Western television. Mail for the relief agencies is flown in periodically from Bangkok, and their supplies come upriver from Singapore on two coastal freighters. Perhaps because of this isolation, some workers have formed cliques, which spend many an evening in spiteful gossip. Some have become so closely identified with the government that they are all but indistinguishable from government employees. Others maintain an attitude of independence and skepticism. But most are afraid to talk to reporters. I asked a young British doctor what kind of anti-malaria drug she took against the deadly strains of cerebral malaria which are common outside the city. She seemed evasive and, for a doctor, strangely uninformed, giving the impression that there was no malaria to worry about. Later, I found out that she knew a great deal about malaria and the new drugs to combat it, but wouldn't talk to me, because she feared that I might blame the prevalence of the disease on the regime.

LIKE a concentration-camp victim, Cambodia seems traumatized by the Pol Pot period. When I stopped to speak to a man repairing bicycles, he rolled up his trouser legs to show me dark-brown scars on his ankles; he had been imprisoned during Pol Pot's rule, he said, and the scars were from leg irons. Others try to repress what happened, and medical workers say there are uncounted cases of psychiatric walking wounded. In Phnom Penh, the infamous Tuol Sleng schoolhouse, which was used as an interrogation center in the Pol Pot era, has become a national testament to the Cambodian holocaust. The little schoolrooms are bare except for iron beds, on which victims were shackled, and chairs for the interrogators. All has been left as it was when it was found ten years ago, even to the bloodstains on the floor; only the corpses have been removed. Approximately twenty thousand prisoners passed through Tuol Sleng. Seven came out alive. Hanging on the walls of a long room are rows of photographs that the interrogators took of their victims just before sentencing them to death. After weeks of starvation and torture, the victims stare at the camera with the hopelessness of those who know that death is at hand.

Some of the victims were connected with the Lon Nol regime, but many more were Khmer Rouge officials caught in Party purges, reminiscent of Stalin's purges in the nineteen-thirties. A few were foreigners left in Phnom Penh when the Khmer Rouge arrived, or passing yachtsmen hauled off their boats. "My name is James William Clark. I am 35 years old," begins the twenty-page handwritten "confession" of one of the inmates. "I was born in the state of Minnesota in the North Central part of the United States." The confession ends with an absurd story about the C.I.A.'s having paid Clark seven hundred thousand dollars to take his sailboat into Cambodian waters. His expression in the photograph on the wall suggests that he was tortured. Among the Tuol Sleng documents, which have been translated by the New York-based Cambodia Documentation Commission, is a page from the interrogators' manual: "The enemies will not confess to us easily. . . . They cannot escape from torture. The only difference is in whether there will be a lot of it or a little of it. . . . Torture [is] a necessary measure. . . . Terrify them, split them up in clever ways. Arrange little skits for them in order to make them give up hope that they will ever live again or ever be able to survive. . . . Bring them over to . . . thinking about their family, their wives, their children and their life."

Ossuaries are being built in the countryside as more and more mass graves are discovered. Even more affecting are mounds of skulls and bones dotted with ragged bits of bloodstained cloth beside open pits—graves that the government has not yet turned into monuments. The government has not been slow to exploit such sites for propaganda purposes, and the propaganda is the more powerful because the Khmer Rouge and their leaders are still at large and are still threatening. Trains are stopped by Khmer Rouge guerrillas and the passengers are massacred. Villages in the western mountains have been attacked and burned, and few people there travel the roads after three in the afternoon. Soviet advisers are prime targets. Late last year, nine were killed in an ambush only a few miles north of the city, Men Saman told me. "Be careful not to look Russian when you travel in the provinces," he said, and he gave me a white sun hat with "Miami" spelled out on it in red thread.

Even with my hat, I was not allowed to travel overland to the provincial capital of Siem Reap, about fifty miles from the Thai border, but had to fly in one of Air Kampuchea's aging Soviet turboprop planes—far more dangerous, it seemed to me. Siem Reap is the site of Angkor, the eight-hundred-



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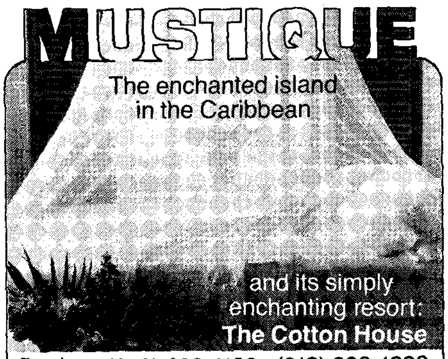

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year-old ruins that are to Cambodia what the pyramids are to Egypt. Every Cambodian regime has used the silhouette of Angkor Wat on its national flag. In the dry season, the countryside around Siem Reap is as arid and hot as that of northern India. Few of the benefits of the new economic energy have reached the countryside there, and the farmers live as they have for half a millennium, except that today they are worse off than ever. In the town of Siem Reap, the Grand Hotel, built in 1904, is the only hotel that has survived the war. At night, the electricity is turned off, and the sound of distant artillery drifts through the mosquito netting. Bats fly in and out of the cavernous rooms, and the oppressive heat relaxes its grip only in the few hours before dawn.

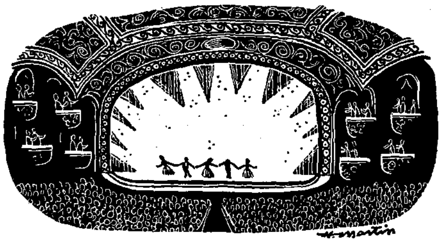
All Cambodians, even the poorest farmers, look back with reverence at twelfth-century Angkor and the lost Khmer civilization. In the fifteenth century, Angkor, like Phnom Penh under Pol Pot, was abandoned. No one knows exactly why. Its extensive waterworks fell into disrepair, and the great roots of fig trees began to strangle the temples and the huge stone faces. It was forgotten for four hundred years, except by a few monks and forest people, until the French stumbled upon the ruins in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, you are told not to stray off the path, because there are land mines nearby, and the outlying temples, which are being reclaimed by the forest, are out of bounds. The ruins served as field hospitals and meeting halls during the Pol Pot period, and marks of Khmer Rouge campfires are still visible. A few monks in saffron robes wander in and out, and the air is heavy with the smell of joss sticks. When I was there, an Australian film crew, a woman from the United Nations, and a group of Vietnamese soldiers being rotated home were the only tourists to be seen. It was hard to remember that Sihanouk had entertained Charles de Gaulle there with parades of elephants and dancers, or that he showed Jacqueline Kennedy around the ruins. Nothing is left of the Auberge du Temple, just beyond the main moat of Angkor Wat, where Dith Pran, of the "Killing Fields" story, worked before the war. The elephants that used to take tourists to the far ruins are long gone, and where touts once sold postcards only a few scruffy militiamen stand guard.

There are some bullet holes and shrapnel scars in the famous bas-reliefs, but the war damage to Angkor was relatively slight. Most of the damage is from neglect and from theft. The Khmer Rouge destroyed some statues in their rage against the past. Some Cambodian refugees stole statues in order to have something to sell when they reached Thailand. In 1979, the Vietnamese Army stole hundreds more. A team of Indian archeologists is now restoring Angkor Wat, and a Polish team is scheduled to work on the nearby Bayon temple, the second-largest temple after Angkor Wat.

My guide led me to the south side of the temple, where the bas-reliefs depicted a series of battles and tortures. I must have seen these on previous visits, before the war, and thought nothing of them. But now I realized that here, carved in stone, were kneeling people being killed by a blow to the back of the head, people hanging upside down, people being burned in fires, people fed to crocodiles—all methods of execution and torture used by the Khmer Rouge centuries later.

No one lingers in the ruins after dark. I stayed long enough to watch the new moon rise over the mysterious stone faces of the Bayon while thousands of chattering parrots flew home to roost in the tall gum trees, and my guide grew increasingly nervous. "Sometimes Pol Pot soldiers, they come back here in the night," he said. "They come back and kill us. Please, sir."

WHO can explain the brutality and the seeming madness of the Khmer Rouge? To a certain extent, savagery has always been part of Cambodian history. Michael Vickery, the author of "Cambodia: 1975-1982," quotes the following from an eyewitness account of an execution: "They brought him to the edge of the burial pit. There at the edge the executioners hit him on the nape of the neck a couple of times with their clubs (. . . to save bullets), he fell into the pit, twitched a bit, and then was still. For cruelty this was only an average execution, because the executioners were in a hurry. There were other methods really revolting to observe." This is a description not of a Khmer Rouge killing but of an execution at the hands of the Khmer Issarak, the anti-French Communist guerrillas of the nineteen-forties and fifties.

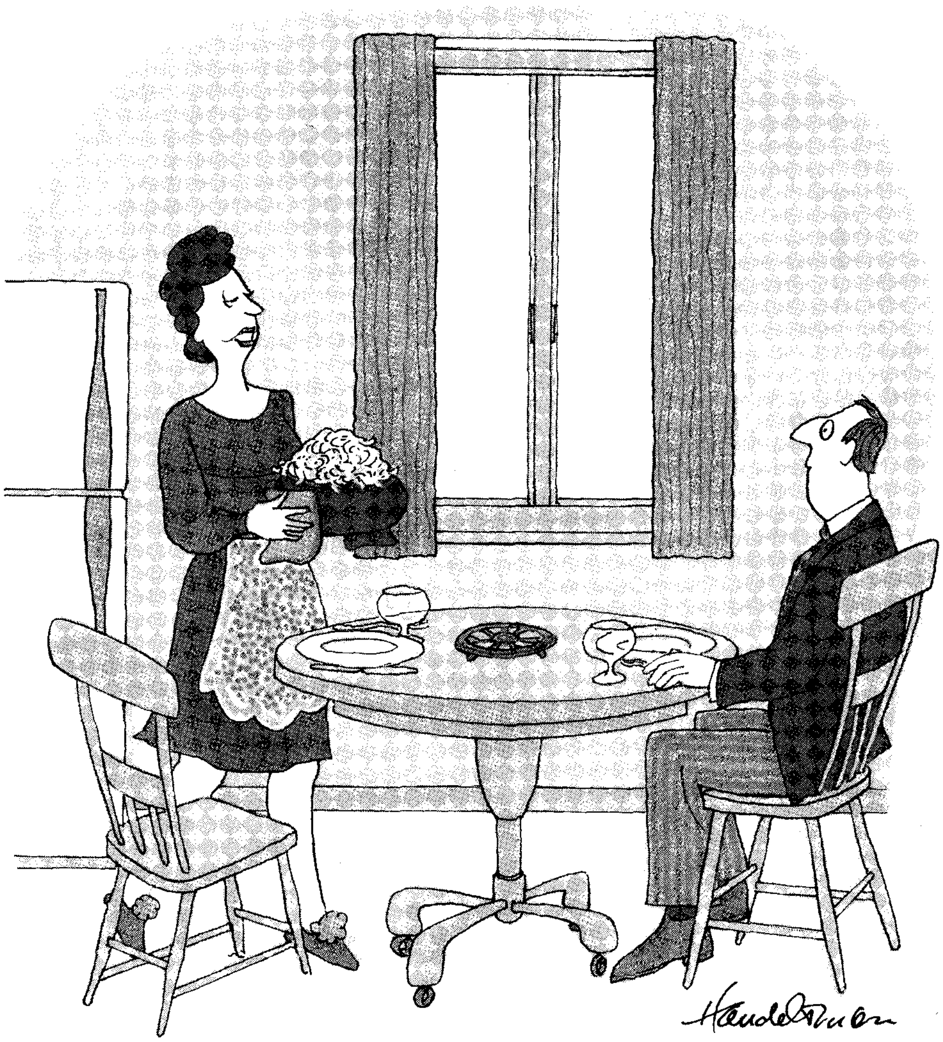


During the Lon Nol regime, few prisoners were taken, and there were many instances of cannibalism. On one occasion, near the end of the regime, Lon Nol soldiers ate a paymaster who showed up in their sector short of money. But the clearing of the cities by the Khmer Rouge; the "purification" that turned Cambodia into a vast gulag; the countless deaths by disease, torture, starvation, neglect, and forced migration; and, of course, the killing grounds, where countless thousands were clubbed to death—all this may have been the insane result of twentieth-century social engineering. There were precedents. The class hatred and anti-clericalism of the French Revolution showed some of the same homicidal vengeance exhibited in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge mass killings of minorities to preserve racial purity had echoes of the Hitler era. The forced collectivization, mass starvation, and Party purges of Stalin's Russia foreshadowed the Cambodian experience. Some scholars say that China's disastrous Great Leap Forward in the nineteen-fifties and the Cultural Revolution in the nineteen-sixties may also have inspired the Khmer Rouge leaders; Pol Pot, these scholars argue, set out to do in one year what Mao Zedong had been unable to do in twenty. Others maintain that the American bombing contributed to the Khmer Rouge brutality, but this does not explain why the Laotian Communists, who underwent an even heavier bombing, did not follow the Khmer Rouge example. The nature of America's responsibility for Cambodia's fate was best summed up by Lon Nol's last ambassador to Washington, Um Sim. "You are much cleverer than we," he said, in April, 1975. "The fact is that there is no commitment in writing, but you induced us into this fighting. The United States has taken advantage of our innocence and lack of experience."

Pol Pot and his lieutenants spent

their student days, in the fifties, in Paris, dabbling in the fashionable Stalinism of the French left, and the Khmer Rouge philosophy no doubt began there. One of their future leaders, Khieu Samphan, wrote a thesis maintaining that Cambodia had the potential to become a utopian agrarian society. Jean-Paul Sartre may have been able to adopt the Stalinist cause in 1952 and reject it after the Hungarian uprising, four years later, without doing anyone any harm, but the same ideas picked up by Pol Pot and his cronies led to an enormous evil. When the spark of half-understood Marxism and revolutionary romanticism was put to the tinder of peasant resentment, the result was a blind and at times mindless *jacquerie* movement in Cambodia. To the Khmer Rouge, class warfare meant countryside against city, and a deep suspicion of education and foreign influences. Xenophobic and ultra-chauvinistic, the Khmer Rouge, stressing self-sufficiency, cut themselves off almost completely from the outside world.

The one exception was China. Mao praised the Khmer Rouge for their efforts to bring about instant Communism, and sent advisers and medical teams to assist them. Later, when details of the bloodletting began to emerge, Deng Xiaoping, who succeeded Mao, scolded the Khmer Rouge, saying, "The cleansing campaign you are conducting [is] somewhat excessive and of too broad a scope." According to the journalist Nayan Chanda, whose book "Brother Enemy" chronicles the collapse of Communist solidarity in Southeast Asia, Deng urged the Khmer Rouge in the nineteen-seventies to "reserve the post of head of state for Sihanouk," in order for them to attain some international respectability. Deng also said that they should change their propaganda. "For the moment, don't put the Communist Party in the foreground; rather, emphasize patriotism, nationalism, and democracy," he said, reminding the Khmer Rouge that the Chinese Communists themselves had made a temporary alliance with Chiang Kai-shek in order to defeat a more immediate enemy, the Japanese. This accommodation remains China's policy today, and the Khmer Rouge, who are dependent on the Chinese for their arms and ammunition, have accepted the advice—at least, for the time being.



"When a man is tired of pasta, sir, he is tired of life. Dr. Johnson."

* * *

The State Department's estimates of Khmer Rouge armed strength run as high as forty thousand, but the Phnom Penh government and also some Western analysts believe that there are only about eight thousand hard-core Khmer Rouge fighters, and that the morale among the rest is low. The Khmer Rouge are, however, kept very well supplied by the Chinese through Thai ports and with the help of the Thai Army. Their equipment is newer and better than that of the government forces, and even if the Chinese were to halt their aid the Khmer Rouge would have enough arms stockpiled to last several years. The Khmer Rouge pretend moderation when you visit them in their Potemkin-village camp—Site 8, in eastern Thailand, close to the Cambodian border. They claim that they do not seek a return to power, and want only to be part of a coalition government under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk. Pol Pot is in retirement, they say, and they have changed their ways. The camp commander, Seng Sok, poses for photographs under a poster of the United Nations declaration of human rights. But defectors from hidden camps, where journalists and international relief organizations are not allowed, say that neither the Khmer Rouge's harsh discipline nor their will to power has dimmed. Mass killings and brutal collectivization have lessened, but Cambodians under Khmer Rouge control are kept captive and are forced to carry ammunition through minefields to the guerrillas operating inside Cambodia.

The Khmer Rouge are ostensibly only one element in a tripartite resistance movement. The other components are non-Communist: Prince Sihanouk's army, and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, under the leadership of the septuagenarian Son Sann, a former Premier and a republican. Sihanouk's army, now said to number about twenty thousand men, is headquartered at satellite camps near another Thai border camp, Site B, and is commanded by Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh. Son Sann's army is based in the sprawling Site 2, on the Cambodian border. With nearly two hundred thousand people, Site 2 is said to be the second-largest Khmer city after Phnom Penh. But Son Sann's army, led by remnants of the Lon Nol regime and numbering fewer than eight thousand men, is the weakest of the resistance groups.

The three factions represent the three regimes—monarchist, republican, and Communist—that ruled Cambodia between the departure of the French and the coming of the Vietnamese, but the resistance forces have no common ideology and have done as much fighting against each other as they have against the Vietnamese and the State of Cambodia forces. They have no secure areas or liberated zones inside Cambodia, and vie instead for the loyalty of the more than three hundred thousand Cambodians in the Thai camps. The Khmer Rouge are telling their cadres to coöperate for now with the non-Communist forces. There are three boats crossing the river, they say, but only one will reach the other side.

The Phnom Penh government suspects that some Khmer Rouge will never give up their guns. But if in exchange for the Vietnamese withdrawal the Chinese and the Thais can be persuaded to end, or even reduce, the flow of arms the violence might lessen, and the Khmer Rouge become like the left-wing Khmer Issarak in the nineteen-fifties: armed revolutionaries skulking in the forests, dangerous but not a real threat to the security of the state. How the Cambodian Army might do on its own against the better-armed and better-disciplined Khmer Rouge forces is open to conjecture. If there is a war, it will probably be a war of small-unit attacks on village militias, and many Cambodians privately concede that if there is no political settlement and China keeps up its present level of support for the Khmer Rouge the government forces may have to surrender some of the less populous mountain areas, amounting to perhaps thirty per cent of the country, and fall back to the towns and the populated agricultural areas. The most powerful weapon in the government's favor is fear. In 1975, the Lon Nol forces, demoralized and seeing no reason to continue the war, thought they could simply take off their uniforms and go home. Today, everyone knows what happened to those who surrendered to the Khmer Rouge. "People may not be all that enthusiastic about this government," a non-Communist office worker in Phnom Penh said to me. "But what is the alternative? The most important thing is a stable life, and these people are probably the best chance we have. People will fight to protect their families."

UNTIL recently, there seemed to be no end in sight to the fighting in Cambodia, but the rapprochement between China and the Soviet Union is changing the situation. China's three preconditions for "normal relations" with the Soviet Union were a pullback of Soviet troops from the Sino-Soviet frontier, Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia. The first and second conditions were met and the third was promised before Mikhail Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping met in Beijing in May—the first Sino-Soviet summit in thirty years. What remains to be done is to work out a deal between Cambodia's warring factions. Gorbachev, at a press conference on May 17th in Beijing, said that the Chinese and the Soviets were "very, very" close to doing that. ("Light at the end of the tunnel" was the expression the translator used—with unconscious irony, one hopes.) The sticking point is what to do with China's client the Khmer Rouge.

Talks among the Cambodian factions have been going on for more than a year, in France and in Indonesia, and although they have not been conclusive the shape of an international settlement is beginning to emerge. All sides agree that there should be a complete Vietnamese withdrawal, coupled with "gradually reduced" military assistance to the three Cambodian factions, and in April the Vietnamese promised to be out by the end of September even if there was no internal settlement. It is also agreed that there should be free elections, and a reconciliation between the Phnom Penh government and the three resistance movements has been discussed. All sides seem willing to accept Prince Sihanouk as head of state. The settlement would be supervised by an as yet unspecified "international control mechanism"—a compromise between a strong peacekeeping force, which the Cambodian resistance groups and the Chinese favor, and a weaker "international control commission," which the Soviets, the Vietnamese, and the Phnom Penh government support.

The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, under the titular leadership of Prince Sihanouk, which still holds its seat in the United Nations and is recognized by most Western countries, including the United States, as the legitimate Cambodian government, has insisted that the Phnom Penh government is illegal and should be disbanded in favor of an interim "quadripartite" government, of which the present government would have only a quarter share. To leave the Phnom Penh regime intact, officials of the Coalition claim, would mean that it would be free to rig elections. The Phnom Penh government, with the backing of Vietnam and the Soviet Union, says that it has no intention of disbanding before elections are held. Hun Sen has said that he would abide by the results of an internationally supervised election, but that to disband the only administration and army that are functioning countrywide would be a formula for anarchy and civil war. "We will accept the Khmer Rouge as a political entity but not if they want to bring their guns," he said.

The first crack in this standoff occurred in Jakarta on May Day, when Hun Sen brought to a meeting with Sihanouk his constitutional changes and some concessions, such as the new flag, designed to woo the Prince away from the Khmer Rouge. The Prince responded, on May 3rd, by indicating for the first time that he might be prepared to dump the Khmer Rouge and return home to Phnom Penh as chief of state in a government dominated by Hun Sen and his colleagues, whom he had previously denounced as Vietnamese puppets. The Prince insisted, however, that the constitution be further modified to allow for a multi-party system, and Hun Sen still rejects the idea of creating an interim government before elections are held, and has no desire to see multi-party politics. In Jakarta in early May, Sihanouk met with Vice-President Dan Quayle, and told him that the Khmer Rouge could not be kept out of a future coalition government unless China was persuaded to abandon them.

As for the Vietnamese, the Soviets have made it clear to them that continued Soviet support for the Cambodian war is no longer possible. Vietnam's economy is near bankruptcy, and the country's desire to shed the Western-imposed embargo that the occupation of Cambodia has created, and move into the world of integrated economies and Western technology before it is too late, is a powerful incentive for getting out of the Cambodian quagmire. Ten years ago, China and Vietnam fought a short, sharp border war, and Nguyen Co Thach, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, has said that the burden now of keeping large forces facing China is even more expensive than the Cambodian war. The Vietnamese are hoping that the Sino-Soviet détente will spill over to include them as well.

The six countries of the non-Communist Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have also been trying, in varying degrees, to broker an end to the Cambodian war. Of the six—Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand—Thailand is the leader, with Singapore and Indonesia as major players. For nine years, Thailand followed China's policy of punishing Vietnam. In 1979, with a potentially hostile Vietnamese Army on its border, and with hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees pouring into the country, Thailand all too readily joined China in building up the shattered Khmer Rouge force into a formidable guerrilla army to "bleed Vietnam white," as Deng Xiaoping put it. But under the leadership of Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan, who was elected in August of last year, Thailand has begun to soften its hostility toward Hanoi. Chatichai sent his Foreign Minister to Hanoi in January—the first high-level Thai visit to Vietnam in thirteen years—and a few weeks later he broke ranks with ASEAN's united front and invited Hun Sen to Bangkok, thus giving him a legitimacy that he had previously been denied. Now that the Vietnamese have promised to leave Cambodia, Chatichai and other Southeast Asians are saying that the mess should be cleaned up as quickly as possible and all of Communist Indo-China opened up to trade and commerce, but clearly not even the innovative Chatichai is going to risk his country's close relations with the regional superpower.

The United States insists that the Vietnamese must withdraw unconditionally, that the Khmer Rouge must not return to power on their own, and that Sihanouk must return to Phnom Penh as chief of state. But how the Khmer Rouge are to be kept down, especially if that means going against China's wishes, is a question that Washington seems unable to answer. In March, when Senator Mark Hatfield, Republican of Oregon, questioned Secretary of State James Baker about including the Khmer Rouge in a coalition government, Baker said that the Khmer Rouge were a "fact of life." In May, the United States Ambassador to Thailand, Daniel O'Donohue, told journalists in Bangkok that he "could not see a scenario" in which the Khmer Rouge would be left out of a Cambodian coalition government.

In the decade since the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia, the American position has been to follow China's lead, and to back Sihanouk's coalition, including the Khmer Rouge, in order to make the Vietnamese suffer for their occupation of Cambodia. So far, the Bush Administration has not changed that policy, and some in the Administration and in Congress argue that it should not until the Vietnamese are well and truly gone. Others, however, argue that it would be better to back Sihanouk and Son Sann in a coalition with Hun Sen and cut the Khmer Rouge out now. Whether the United States could persuade China to abandon the Khmer Rouge, or whether the

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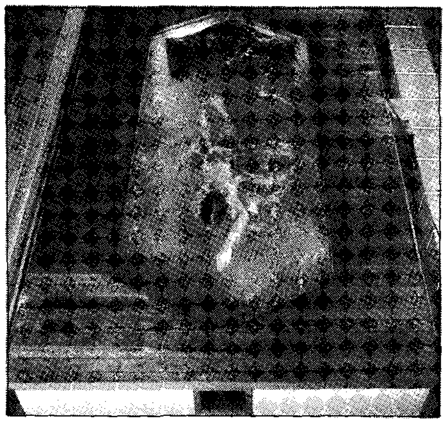

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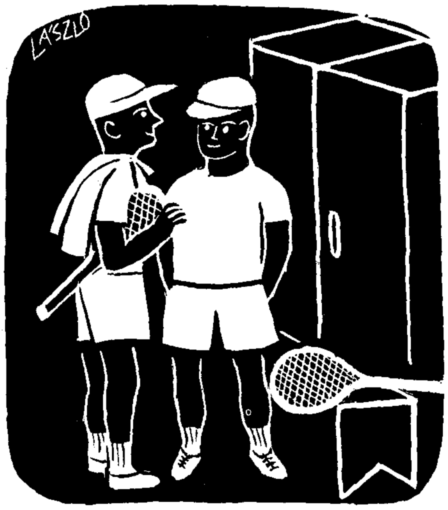
United States would be willing to abandon them if China refused, is not clear. The "China card" is a keystone of American policy, which has not been shaken even by China's recent crackdown on the pro-democracy movement. Given the mistrust with which the Chinese view the Vietnamese, it is unlikely that China would agree to abandoning the Khmer Rouge until the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia is complete. Even then, China might want to keep its Khmer Rouge connection as an insurance policy against Vietnamese duplicity. How the recent upheavals in China will affect the situation is unknown, but at the moment the Khmer Rouge's great benefactor, Deng Xiaoping, is evidently still in command, and it's unlikely that any changes in policy toward Cambodia will be made. China is probably in no mood now to accommodate American diplomatic initiatives. As for Sihanouk, he said in the nineteen-fifties that the influence of countries such as France and the United States might come and go but China was a constant factor in Southeast Asia. He recognizes that if he is to stay alive between the crocodile and the tiger he must maintain his friendship with China.

At the moment, the United States gives only nonlethal aid to the non-Communist factions. But Quayle told reporters in Jakarta that "lethal aid is an option we're considering," and he added that covert aid was a possibility. Representative Stephen Solarz, of New York, is lobbying hard to give lethal aid to Sihanouk and Son Sann, as a counterweight to the superior arms and manpower of both the Khmer Rouge and the Phnom Penh army. Solarz' supporters argue that if Sihanouk's army is given weapons such as the United States supplied to the Afghan resistance it would grow and soon dominate—politically, if not militarily. Others argue that to add more weapons to any Cambodian faction at this late hour, after the Vietnamese have promised to leave, would simply prolong the civil war. Senator Claiborne Pell, of Rhode Island, has threatened to introduce amendments to Solarz' proposed bill which would ban aid to any faction allied with the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge have no supporters either in Congress or in the Administration, but there are people in both who believe that there can be no agreement without China's consent, and that the Khmer Rouge would be less dangerous inside the tent than outside it. By mid-June, the Administration appeared to be backing away from covert lethal aid in the face of congressional opposition, but the issue has not yet been resolved.

THE key personalities who have emerged are Hun Sen; Khieu Samphan, the official head of the Khmer Rouge; and, of course, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the man who has remained at the center of Cambodian history for nearly fifty years. Although Party Secretary Heng Samrin remains the titular leader of the State of Cambodia, Hun Sen, who is both its Prime Minister and its Foreign Minister, seems to be the more powerful force in Phnom Penh. I asked a Vietnamese diplomat why, and he said, "Perhaps Hun Sen is more intelligent." Hun Sen is also a more convincing nationalist than Heng Samrin, who will never be considered anything but a Vietnamese puppet. Nationalist credentials are going to play an increasing role in Cambodian politics as the Vietnamese withdraw. Hun Sen, who, at thirty-eight, is slight and boyish-looking, with an earnest manner, seems more like a graduate student than like a former Khmer Rouge commander, but behind horn-rimmed glasses is a glass eye—the result of a wound he received in the war against Lon Nol. "He showed his political skills when he was a young boy," I was told by a relative of his in Phnom Penh. "He was smaller than anyone else, but he could always persuade people to do something he wanted. He had a lot of friends." Hun Sen fled into Vietnam in 1977, because, the relative said, "he thought Pol Pot's orders to fight the Vietnamese would be disastrous for Cambodia." The fact that the Eastern Zone Khmer Rouge, of which Hun Sen was a member, were then being put to death by the thousand probably had something to do with his move as well.



"What was it that first disillusioned Hun Sen about the Khmer Rouge?" I asked.

"The communal kitchens," the relative said. "He didn't like the communal kitchens. The Khmer Rouge never said anything about communal kitchens in 1975. They imposed them only after they came to power." Aside from the brutality and the killings, the thing that Cambodians most remember and loathe about the Khmer Rouge is their breaking up of family units and making everyone "eat out of the same pot."

Khieu Samphan, though he was one of the original Khmer Rouge theorists in the Paris group in the nineteen-fifties, now seems to be the sole Khmer Rouge leader acceptable at the international negotiating table. He once served in Sihanouk's Cabinet, when the Prince was trying to co-opt the left, but the two became archenemies, and in the nineteen-sixties Khieu Samphan slipped into the jungle to escape arrest. After the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh, he boasted to Sihanouk, "We have fulfilled all the conditions to be one-hundred-per-cent Communist. We can surpass even our Chinese brothers. With one giant leap forward we can reach the goal of Communism, and not go through stages of socialism." I asked a Thai diplomat why Khieu Samphan did not have the same reputation as Pol Pot, and was told, "Perhaps because he was abroad representing Democratic Kampuchea when many of the worst killings were taking place. Or perhaps it is because we all had to settle on somebody from the Khmer Rouge to talk to, and he was the most articulate."

Lastly, there is Sihanouk, to whom the adjective "mercurial" is invariably attached. The Prince, who is sixty-seven, has spent his entire adult life in politics, struggling to keep his country neutral and independent, and because he and his country have had so little real power his career has been a dance in which he has tried to use people who thought they could use him. He tried to use the French, who had put him on the throne to be a pro-French puppet instead of a nationalist. During the

Vietnam War, he tried to use the Americans, who thought him just another pliable Indo-Chinese leader they could buy and cajole and, if that failed, threaten. He tried to use the Khmer Rouge, who proceeded to use him, to great effect, as the titular head of their movement. Today, he is trying to use Hun Sen.

About a year after the Khmer Rouge took over, Sihanouk moved from Beijing back to Phnom Penh, only to find himself under virtual house arrest in his palace. Five members of his immediate family were taken from the palace by the Khmer Rouge and were never seen again. When Phnom Penh was falling to the Vietnamese, Sihanouk conned Pol Pot into sending him to the United Nations, and, once in New York, he made a dramatic plea to the United States for political asylum. He later became the head of the resistance coalition based in Thailand—a position he has resigned five times and taken up again after making his point. He has denounced the Khmer Rouge as genocidal murderers, but he sticks with them as long as he feels he can use them.

There has always been something operetta-like about Sihanouk. Few chiefs of state have produced their own movies, for example, but the Prince has produced and directed several films, the best known of them a spy thriller called "Shadow Over Angkor," which involves a C.I.A. plot against Cambodia. He composed the music for the film, wrote the script, and took the leading role, opposite his wife, Monique. Predictably, when he held his annual film festival his films won most of the prizes. In 1968, when some American soldiers in a landing barge lost their way on the Mekong and wandered into neutral Cambodia, Sihanouk threw them in jail and made a formal protest to the United States, but instead of keeping the soldiers incarcerated he sent his tailor around to the dungeon and had them all fitted for white linen suits for Cambodia's Independence Day. He invited them to join him on the reviewing stand, and then, after giving them a meal at the best restaurant in town, he let them go.

Nearly twenty years have passed since Sihanouk ruled Cambodia, and the number of Cambodians who worshipped him as a god and rushed to touch the ground he walked on—as I watched them do in the sixties—has dwindled. A generation of Cambodians have grown up not knowing Sihanouk, and they have been bombarded with propaganda pointing out, truthfully, that Sihanouk threw in his lot with the Khmer Rouge, whom they hate and fear. Too much blood has been spilled for Sihanouk ever to regain the power he once held; in fact, his political shelf life may be shorter inside his own country than abroad. But he remains the one symbol of unity and legitimacy which all factions can accept as a figurehead, and his sense of theatre has not left him. One day in mid-May, reporters were taken by the Thai government to a spot called Phnom Srouth, which, they were told, was three miles inside "liberated" Cambodia, to watch Sihanouk accept credentials from visiting Chinese, Senegalese, and North Korean ambassadors. Cameras whirred and clicked, and Sihanouk spent the morning on what he called "Sihanouk-controlled Cambodian soil." It was not until the reporters left that they began to suspect that the whole charade had taken place inside Thailand.

LATER this month, Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen will meet again, in Paris, for another discussion, to be followed, in early August, by an international conference that will attempt to hammer out a comprehensive settlement to the Cambodian war. Hun Sen has to decide if he will accept Sihanouk's condition for multi-party elections, and Sihanouk has to decide what his role will be vis-à-vis the Khmer Rouge if peace is to follow the Vietnamese withdrawal in September. Whether the Prince will return to Phnom Penh again as the symbol of his country's independence or will continue to hold court on the Thai-Cambodian border will be in the balance. While the politicians posture, the Cambodian people, both at home and in exile, long for peace. Dith Pran, the hero of "The Killing Fields" and now a photojournalist for the *Times*, whose story, because of the power of Hollywood, has defined the Cambodian tragedy for millions of people, testified before Congress in June, and said, "I have seen so much killing and dying in Cambodia, first during the civil war and then under the Khmer Rouge. So many Cambodians have been killed, we must prevent this fighting from continuing."

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DANCING

At the Supermarket

WHEN, on June 21st, Mikhail Baryshnikov announced that he was resigning his post as artistic director of American Ballet Theatre, the only people who were surprised were those who had forgotten how close he had come to resigning in the past. Those who hadn't forgotten wondered why he really meant it this time, and whether he might not be persuaded to change his mind. The dancers were reasonably happy; box-office was good. The new "Swan Lake" had failed, but Baryshnikov had weathered artistic failures before. The doubts being raised in the press about casting and other policy matters were the same old doubts, and as for the question of who ran the company when its director was off appearing in plays or movies Baryshnikov had given an answer of sorts by arranging to close down his hit show "Metamorphosis" for five weeks while the A.B.T. Met season was on.

The only thing that seemed really odd about Baryshnikov's decision was its timing. Ballet Theatre still had a week to run at the Met, and it was being followed by the Kirov, in its first visit to New York in twenty-five years. The Kirov arouses curiosity not least because it is Baryshnikov's home company and the source of some of the changes that his administration has wrought in A.B.T.'s dance style and repertory. Then, A.B.T. celebrates its fiftieth anniversary next year, and among the events being considered is a trip to the Soviet Union, with Baryshnikov returning for the first time since his defection. He would still lead the tour; he does not intend to retire until September of 1990, rounding out a term of ten years. After that, it's plays, movies—whatever he finds to perform at the age of forty-two. He is a performer, after all, and needs to earn a living. Under his current contract, A.B.T. pays him nothing—his price for maintaining his artistic freedom. The virtue of this early announcement is not only that it gives the company plenty of time to find Baryshnikov's successor, whoever he or she may be (the landscape is not exactly crowded with good prospects); it also paves the way for open debate, which will almost surely take place, about the company's position and its future course.

There is no question that the end of the Baryshnikov era finds the company better off than it was in 1980. Baryshnikov hasn't revolutionized Ballet Theatre; he has made it in some ways more American, and he has taken to heart the eclectic tastes of its founders. Under his predecessor, Lucia Chase, the company's artistic responsibilities lay in several directions. Baryshnikov followed them all, some to their ultimate conclusion. There was the conservative direction, in which he added to the company's collection of nineteenth-century Russian classics while refurbishing those already in stock; surely nothing more remains to be imported from the Kirov or from the Sergeyev archive, which furnished "The Sleeping Beauty." There was the progressive trend, which Baryshnikov pursued with clear-sighted enthusiasm; instead of insipid modern ballets by Glen Tetley and John Neumeier and Dennis Nahat he commissioned new pieces from talented modern-dance choreographers—Twyla Tharp, David Gordon, Karole Armitage, Mark Morris—and acquired examples of the work of such American masters as Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor. Balanchine holdings were expanded from two ballets to nine. Then, there was the curatorial side of things: ballets by Antony Tudor and Agnes de Mille on which the company had built its initial reputation were loyally maintained. By way of tribute to the founding generation, Baryshnikov last year went so far as to revive two defunct Tudor pieces and to put on a new work by de Mille.

To all these undertakings, implicit in Ballet Theatre's beginnings, Baryshnikov has added one more: the shoring up of A.B.T. as an institution. He has started a school, the School of Classical Ballet, and he has sponsored the career of a staff choreographer, Clark Tippet. Tippet is not the first choreographer to emerge from A.B.T.'s ranks, but he is the first who has chosen to stay and develop there rather than join another company (like Jerome Robbins) or found one of his own (like Eliot Feld). Ballet Theatre at fifty has reached a point of consolidation; having amassed so much of the dance world's wealth, it finds space and shelter for a Tippet. And Tippet is very much an institutional choreographer, content to put himself at the company's service, meeting seasonal needs for this or that type of ballet, and providing choreography that does more than flatter the dancers—that places them in critical perspective, against the background of a tradition.

I. VanRynbach

However, to speak of tradition at A.B.T. is to speak of a series of phases and parasitical formations. The company has always been dependent on what was being produced elsewhere. Even when a Tippet appears, working smoothly and selflessly with dancers he has known for years, his sense of tradition is secondhand. Baryshnikov himself has never been seriously interested in choreography. One reason the "Swan Lake" failed is that, much as he may have enjoyed working on revisions, particularly of the fourth act, he had no great passionate attachment to the job, and he chose a designer, Pier-Luigi Samaritani, whose knowledge of the ballet barely extended beyond this production. The "Swan Lake" that resulted was an honest and tasteful effort, strangely and fatally deficient in ideas. There were other signs this season that Baryshnikov's ingenuity was being taxed. After nine years, he has run through virtually every choreographer who could be called upon to provide him with a useful new ballet. He began in 1983 with custom-built pieces by Twyla Tharp, and this year he started over from the beginning, signing Tharp as an Artistic Associate. Her first contributions were a cluster of works that seemed to spring from her own analysis of A.B.T. eclecticism: she provided something old ("Everlast"), something new ("Quartet"), something borrowed ("In the Upper Room," "The Fugue"), and something blue ("Bum's Rush"). The evening crashed between stools, just as Ballet Theatre's plural aspirations always have. But Tharp can do better. At its current best, her work mirrors

BUT, REINHARDT, YOU HAVE ANOTHER WEEK AND A HALF LEFT OF YOUR VACATION.
I HAD TO COME BACK, CHIEF. THEY LAUGHED AT MY BLACK SOCKS ON NANTUCKET.

the tension in A.B.T. dancing between conservative and progressive impulses. Tharp is to A.B.T. what Nijinska was to the Ballets Russes—a modernist. Nijinska crossed over from the academy, and Tharp crosses over *to* it. It is hard to think of another American choreographer who could do more to help A.B.T. resolve its identity crisis.

Tippet this season continued to fulfill his function by producing two premières. "Rigaudon," with a large cast of principals drawn from soloist and corps ranks, was a fresh, slightly irreverent look at the Baroque roots of classical dance. The music was Benjamin Britten's infectiously danceable "Simple Symphony." Tippet, Britten, and the dancers got on well for the most part. The steps had impact and variety, the situations were diverting, and the jokes came out of the movement. Tippet's flair for devices tends at the moment to act as a cover for structural faults. In the sarabande, a surplus of lifts sought to compensate for the lack of flow in adagio, and duos kept making themselves into trios (or the reverse) to avoid dealing with logical consequence and dramatic resolution. The faster sections were jerky and episodic.

"Rigaudon" was pleasant to watch in spite of its flaws. "Some Assembly Required" had no flaws other than undue length and repetition, which I attributed to Tippet's choice of music, William Bolcom's Second Sonata for Violin and Piano. The choreography appeared to have been developed from Tippet's own skills as a character dancer and a partner, and the form it took—a confrontational pas de deux, by turns squabbly and tender—rose easily from the blues-flavored sound of violin and piano. I should have enjoyed "Some Assembly Required" more, but Amanda McKerrow in a ponytail and John Gardner in bluejeans spelled instant cliché to my eye—Ballets U.S.A.—and, no matter how many different lifts, drags, and holds Tippet invented, or how keenly he timed the shifting moods of tension and relaxation, I couldn't get interested in the characters. They seemed weaselly rather than pathetic. The house took to them, though, and Tippet had his biggest hit to date. Of all the pieces he has made—five since 1986—this one probably cost him the least amount of work.

The breed of choreographer which Tippet represents reflects a new stability in American ballet. Like Peter Martins and Robert La Fosse at New York City Ballet, Tippet deals in conscious imitations, from a set of conventions. Whether you like the work or not, you can see where it came from and what its practitioners think about it. It's interesting that three of the five Tippet pieces—"Enough Said," "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1," and "Rigaudon"—have been derived from Balanchine. It isn't as if dancers at A.B.T. were stylistically focussed, the way N.Y.C.B. dancers are. When Tippet deviates from typecasting and brings out "an aspect" of McKerrow, the effect is one of impersonal versatility, whereas when Martins does one of his moody studies of Kyra Nichols we are referred to something we already know about her. This is a consequence of the way the two companies have always been run. Perhaps now is the time to say it: A.B.T. is what American ballet would have been without Balanchine—without, that is, a concept of style, an idea of how and why we dance. A.B.T. had one visionary decade, its first. Since then, it has operated on notions of ballet as a business. The quandary in which it now finds itself stems from more than a crisis of leadership; it stems from the need to reassert a reason to exist.

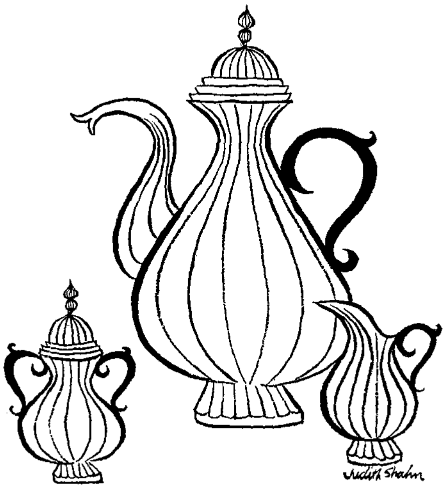
Ballet Theatre has always followed rather than led its audience. For years, it pandered to the local prejudice against American classical dancers. At A.B.T., classicism was of the nineteenth century, and it was preferably Russian, although it could be Danish, British, or French. It was not American—or not *North* American. Dancers from Weehawken and the Bronx, from Chicago and Los Angeles, did rise to stardom, but they had to fight off foreign competition. Baryshnikov has done as much as the force of destiny itself to break down that prejudice; he has barred guest stars, yielding only last season to permit appearances by the Kirov's Altynai Asylmuratova and Farukh Ruzimatov, and this season taking in Andris Liepa, of the Bolshoi. Most important, he has kept himself from performing when he felt he could not give of his best. Perhaps this will be seen in retrospect as his greatest triumph of management: Baryshnikov did not appear, and still the people came. The company's dancers—all American classical dancers—owe him a debt of gratitude.

But is A.B.T. a classical company? Not until the mid-sixties did it start producing the Petipa classics, and then because it was smart box-office. American audiences were hungry for full-length versions of the Tchaikovsky ballets—for a repertory that looked like the Bolshoi's, the Kirov's, the Royal Ballet's. From that point on through the seventies, A.B.T. coasted on star performances in old ballets or in vehicles that had little else to recommend them. These were gala years, and many who think they were the essence of A.B.T. glamour have charged Baryshnikov with undermining it. They are partly correct: if Lucia Chase were still in charge, the Met would be full of French ballerinas and Fernando Bujones, dancing ballets by Maurice Béjart and William Forsythe. It was Chase's luck, not her taste, that gave us the seventies, when Baryshnikov arrived, to join Makarova and to partner Gelsey Kirkland, and when the rising stars were Cynthia Gregory and Martine van Hamel and the young Bujones. The seventies are not the eighties.

The stylistic incoherence of Ballet Theatre has been much less of a problem since Baryshnikov instituted his "Kirov" reforms. The corps de ballet is now an energized unit; middle-rank soloists, with varying degrees of capability and qualities of personal emphasis, exhibit a common respect for form. But in a ballet company artistic leadership comes from the ballerinas. Baryshnikov's failure to develop ballerinas is in large part a consequence of his imposition of a highly specialized classical style on a semiclassical company. The style works well for the men, who have Baryshnikov himself as a model. For the women the pedagogical methods at A.B.T. have only enforced a discipline, they haven't cultivated a style. This season, the woman who looked most like a ballerina to me was Kathleen Moore, who is never cast in the classical ballerina roles. Nearly everything she did had vigor and integrity, and in her Taylor and Tharp roles she seemed to be dancing for sheer delight. Only the lead in Tudor's "Pillar of Fire" continues not to incite her. Performers like this are as rare as pure-water classicists, and at A.B.T. they're more fun. I'd rather watch Moore than Christine Dunham or Cheryl Yeager, who are ranked as ballerinas, and Gil Boggs than Julio Bocca, whom I find colorless, for all his great talent and promise. McKerrow, the strongest of the company's younger classicists, appeared this season to have vanquished any lingering temptation she may have felt to be Makarova (or Kirkland being Makarova), but her Odette-Odile was blankly punctilious, as if she hadn't made up her mind what she *would* be. In the same role, Susan Jaffe danced with exaggerated plastique, straining after expressionistic effects that have no place in this ballet. But then Jaffe is always more persuasive in character and modern roles than she is in classical roles, and the same might be said of Alessandra Ferri and Leslie Browne. This is an old Ballet Theatre-ballerina problem, aggravated by the now dangerously lopsided repertory. The *modern* works these women perform may be less popular than the old Russian classics, but they're livelier by far, and they're not enslaved to hardened pedagogy. Not the least of the grievous ironies that confront the company is the fact that the nineteenth-century repertory is still what the public wants most to see and the company is least well prepared to dance.

That part of Baryshnikov's Kirov experiment which hasn't run aground on Ballet Theatre's divided intentions has run its course. The company has profited where it could, and now something new must take its place. There remains the Balanchine repertory, which A.B.T. performs with baffling inconsistency. One might expect it to be abysmal in "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," and it is; but why should it retain its grip on "Theme and Variations" and lose control of "Ballet Imperial"? Every time I see a Balanchine ballet at A.B.T., I seem to see a sign in the air above it saying "Choose." The company can't have this and the Kirov, too. It can't have the Kirov and American Moderns. It can't be all things in dance. The Great American Ballet Supermarket no longer exists. And maybe it never did.

THERE have been more revivals of "Les Noces" since its choreographer died than there were in her lifetime. Bronislava Nijinska choreographed Stravinsky's "ballet cantata" in 1923, for Diaghilev. The revival in 1936, by the de Basil company, was short-lived, and there was not another until thirty years later, when the Royal Ballet gathered its forces under Frederick Ashton and put on a "Noces" that reëstablished Nijinska's place in history. Svetlana Beriosova was the Bride, Robert Mead the Groom; Anthony Dowell, not yet a principal dancer, was outstanding as a Friend of the Groom. The choreographer herself supervised the production. She remained active until the last year of her life, 1972, restaging her masterpiece along with other works—"Les Biches" (1924), "Chopin Concerto" (1937), "Brahms Variations" (1944). During this period, her closest associate and her rehearsal assistant was her daughter, Irina Nijinska-Raetz, and it was Mme. Irina who staged the first American "Noces," by the Oakland Ballet, in 1981. There have since been productions by Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, by the Dance Department of the State University of New York at Purchase, and by the Feld Ballet. Dance Theatre of Harlem has just done it at the City Center; the Joffrey will do it there next season. All these versions are the work of Mme. Irina, who is now seventy-six, and who deserves a lot of credit for pursuing her mother's vision so faithfully for so long. But we must ever lament the circumstances that prevented Nijinska—an American citizen since 1949—from staging an American "Noces" herself.



I have seen the Oakland production only on film and the Pittsburgh one not at all; still, it seems fair to say that none of the posthumous revivals have anything like the power of that Royal Ballet production of 1966, which came to New York a year later. What I chiefly recall, and indeed never will forget, is the combination of wildness and precision. Without that, the concentration of means for which the ballet is famous does not make sense: the music, scored for four-part chorus, four soloists, four pianos, and percussion; the dancers in their plain brown-and-white uniforms; the rude platform with benches, backed by a child's drawing of a cabin wall—all this will seem purposeless, picky, and thin. At Dance Theatre of Harlem, the vocal forces were in fact vastly reduced. The dancing was curiously underenergized; it had a glazed tone and texture more appropriate to Tudor's "Dark Elegies." Lorraine Graves was an incongruous blushing Bride; Bernard McClain and Augustus van Heerden were unaccountably stolid as the Bridegroom and his Friend.

As an added attraction the company presented Nijinska's last work for the stage, "Rondo Capriccioso" (1952), a meretricious piece of salon choreography. It is a revival that her reputation could have done without. Rosella Hightower, for whom the leading role was made, staged the ballet, which is basically a pas de deux about a hunter trapping a bird. Stephanie Dabney, predictably cast (she is the company's Firebird), danced predictably, partnered by Ronald Perry.

The opening ballet on this all-Nijinska program was "Les Biches," which Mme. Irina reset for the company in 1983. The performance was as glassily innocent of style and atmosphere as that of "Les Noces." Could not "Chopin Concerto" have been done instead? Unseen in New York since the forties but well spoken of at the time, it would surely have told us something of who Nijinska became after she left Diaghilev and before her decline set in. Ashton, who worked for her in Ida Rubinstein's company (and may have contributed some of his own energy to the Royal Ballet "Noces"), called Nijinska "one of the greatest choreographers of our day." The Royal version of "Les Noces" came about after an invitation to Jerome Robbins fell through. Robbins eventually staged his "Noces" for American Ballet Theatre. That seemed to preclude an American staging of Nijinska's ballet, and when the Royal presented the Nijinska in New York its stony reception by the audience insured that it would not be seen here again.

The next chance for "Les Noces" arose with New York City Ballet's Stravinsky Festival in 1972. A revival would have made a fitting memorial to both the composer and the choreographer, but Robbins by then was back working at N.Y.C.B., and Balanchine set himself against staging any version of the ballet for the company, saying that he considered the music, along with that of "Le Sacre," unchoreographable. Nijinska's modernist aesthetic had no greater expression than "Les Noces"; neoclassicism in ballet has had no greater monument. But the current spate of revivals would seem to have been inspired more by the fact that a woman choreographer collaborated with a woman designer, Nathalie Gontcharova. Other companies besides Dance Theatre of Harlem twin the ballet with "Les Biches," which was designed by Marie Laurencin. However, in D.T.H.'s version "Les Biches" has been partially redesigned by John C. Gilkerson.

—ARLENE CROCE

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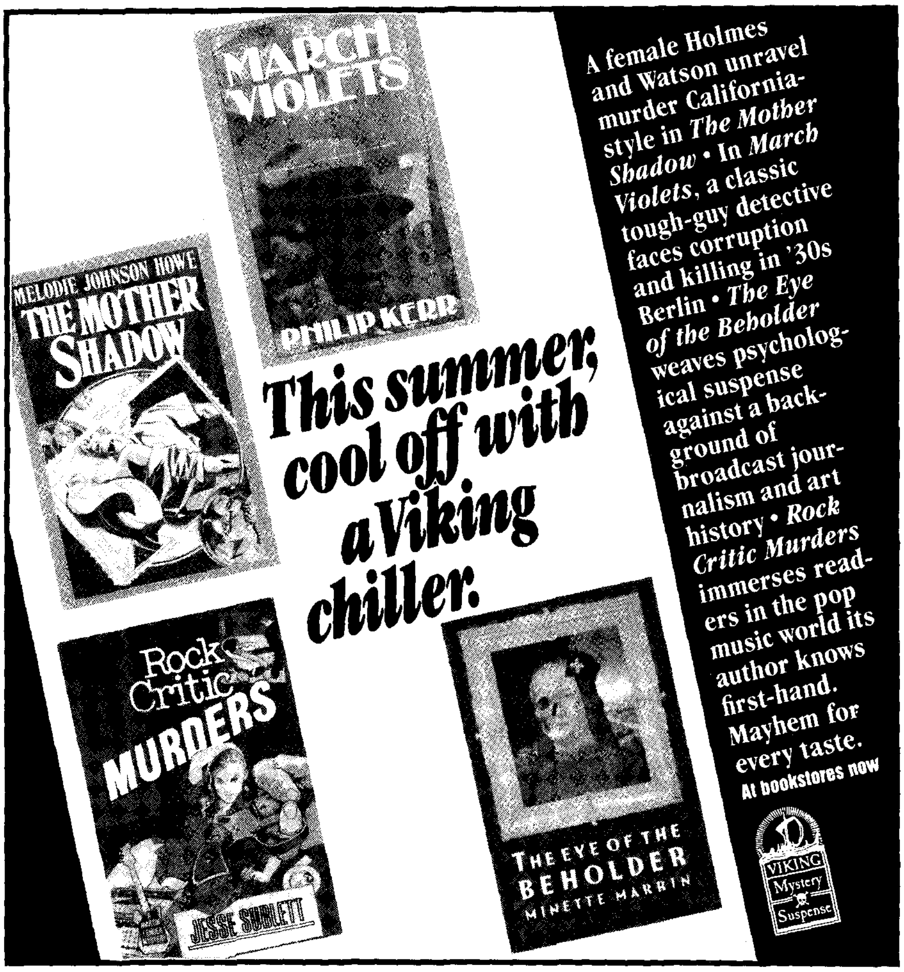

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BOOKS

Somewhere Becoming Rain

AT first glance, the publication in the United States of Philip Larkin's "Collected Poems" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22.50) looks like a long shot. While he lived, Larkin never crossed the Atlantic, and, unlike some other British poets, he was genuinely indifferent to his American reputation. His bailiwick was England. Larkin was so English that he didn't even care much about Britain, and he rarely mentioned it. Even within England, he travelled little. He spent most of his adult life at the University of Hull, as its chief librarian. A trip to London was an event. When he was there, he resolutely declined to promote his reputation. He guarded it but would permit no hype.

Though Larkin's diffidence was partly a pose, his reticence was authentic. At no point did he announce that he had built a better mousetrap. The world had to prove it by beating a path to his door. The process took time, but was inexorable, and by now, only three years after his death, at the age of sixty-three, his renown has reached a kind of apotheosis. On the British best-seller lists, Larkin's "Collected Poems" was up there for months at a stretch, along with Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time" and Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses." In Larkin's case, this extraordinary level of attention was reached without either general relativity's having to be reconciled with quantum mechanics or Ayatollah Khomeini's having to pronounce anathema. The evidence suggests that Larkin's poetry, from a standing start, gets to everyone capable of being got to. One's tender concern that it should survive the perilous journey across the sea is therefore perhaps misplaced. A mission like this might have no more need of a fighter escort than pollen on the wind.

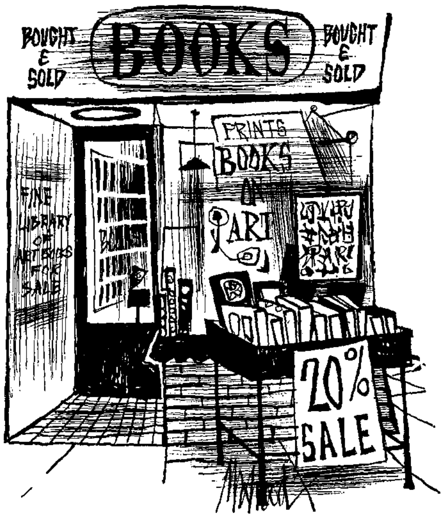
The size of the volume is misleading. Its meticulous editor, Anthony Thwaite—himself a poet of high reputation—has included poems that Larkin finished but did not publish, and poems that he did not even finish. Though tactfully carried out, this editorial inclusiveness is not beyond cavil. What was elliptically concentrated has become more fully understandable, but whether Larkin benefits from being more fully understood is questionable. Eugenio Montale, in many ways a comparable figure, was, it might be recalled, properly afraid of what he called "too much light."

During his lifetime, Larkin published only three mature collections of verse, and they were all as thin as blades. "The Less Deceived" (1955), "The Whitsun Weddings" (1964), and "High Windows" (1974) combined to a thickness barely half that of the "Collected Poems." Larkin also published, in 1966, a new edition of his early, immature collection, "The North Ship," which had first come out in 1945. He took care, by supplying the reissue with a deprecatory introduction, to keep it clearly separate from the poems that he regarded as being written in his own voice.

The voice was unmistakable. It made misery beautiful. One of Larkin's few even halfway carefree poems is "For Sydney Bechet," from "The Whitsun Weddings." Yet the impact that Larkin said Bechet made on him was exactly the impact that Larkin made on readers coming to him for the first time:

On me your voice falls as they say
  love should,
Like an enormous yes.

What made the paradox delicious was the scrupulousness of its expression. There could be no doubt that Larkin's outlook on life added up to an enormous no, but pessimism had been given a saving grace. Larkin described an England changing in ways he didn't like. He described himself aging in ways he didn't like. The empire had shrunk to a few islands, his personal history to a set of missed opportunities. Yet his desperate position, which ought logically to have been a license for incoherence, was expressed with such linguistic fastidiousness, on the one hand, and such lyrical enchantment, on the other, that the question arose of whether he had not at least partly cultivated that view in order to get those results. Larkin once told an interviewer, "Deprivation for me is what daffodils were for Wordsworth."

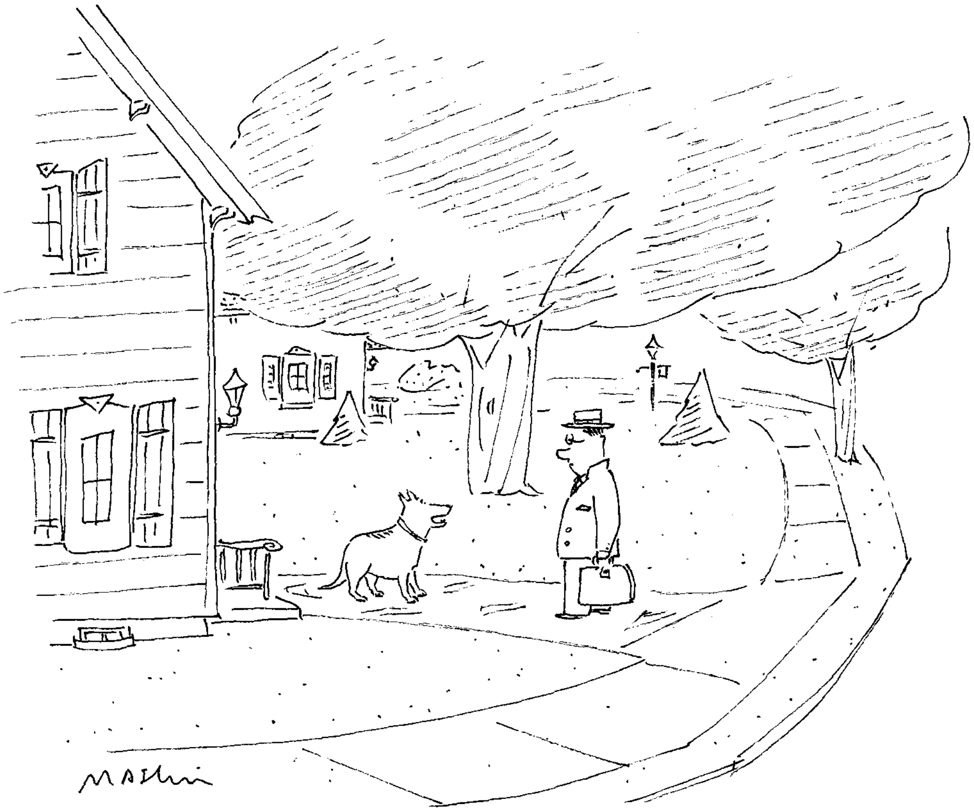


In the three essential volumes, the balanced triad of Larkin's achievement, all the poems are poised vibrantly in the force field of tension between his profound personal hopelessness and the assured command of their carrying out. Perfectly designed, tightly integrated, transforming a psychological falling apart into an aesthetic fitting together, they release, from their compressed but always strictly parsable syntax, sudden phrases of ravishing beauty, as the river in Dante's Paradise, by giving off sparks, suggests that light is what it is made of.

These irresistible fragments are everyone's way into Larkin's work. They are the first satisfaction his poetry offers. There are other and deeper satisfactions, but it was his quotability that gave Larkin the biggest cultural impact on the British reading public since Auden—and over a greater social range. Lines by Larkin are the common property of everyone in Britain who reads seriously at all—a state of affairs which has not obtained since the time of Tennyson. Phrases, whole lines, and sometimes whole stanzas can be heard at the dinner table.

There is an evening coming in
Across the fields, one never seen
  before,
That lights no lamps . . .

Only one ship is seeking us, a black-
Sailed unfamiliar, towing at her
  back
A huge and birdless silence. In her
  wake
No waters breed or break . . .



"You are trespassing on private property, and I'd like you to leave. I don't know how I can make it any clearer than that."

• •

Now, helpless in the hollow of
An unarmorial age, a trough
Of smoke in slow suspended skeins
Above their scrap of history,
Only an attitude remains . . .

And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled
A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower
Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain . . .

How distant, the departure of young men
Down valleys, or watching
The green shore past the salt-white cordage
Rising and falling . . .

Steep beach, blue water, towels, red bathing caps,
The small hushed waves' repeated fresh collapse
Up the warm yellow sand, and further off
A white steamer stuck in the afternoon . . .

Later, the square is empty: a big sky
Drains down the estuary like the bed
Of a gold river . . .

At death, you break up: the bits that were you
Start speeding away from each other for ever
With no one to see . . .

Rather than words comes the thought of high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless.

Drawn in by the subtle gravity beam of such bewitchment, the reader becomes involved for the rest of his life in Larkin's doomed but unfailingly dignified struggle to reconcile the golden light in the high windows with the endlessness it comes from. His sense of inadequacy, his fear of death are in every poem. His poems could not be more personal. But, equally, they could not be more universal. Seeing the world as the hungry and thirsty see food and drink, he describes it for the benefit of those who are at home in it, their senses dulled by satiation. The reader asks, How can a man who feels like this bear to live at all?

Life is first boredom, then fear.
Whether or not we use it, it goes,
And leaves what something hidden from us chose,
And age, and then the only end of age.

But the reader gets an answer: there are duties that annul nihilism, satisfactions beyond dissatisfaction, and, above all, the miracle of continuity. Larkin's own question about what life is worth if we have to lose it he answers with the contrary question, about what life would amount to if it didn't go on without us. Awkward at the seaside, ordinary people know better in their bones than the poet among his books:

The white steamer has gone. Like breathed-on glass
The sunlight has turned milky. If the worst
Of flawless weather is our falling short,
It may be that through habit these do best,
Coming to water clumsily undressed
Yearly; teaching their children by a sort
Of clowning; helping the old, too, as they ought.

Just as Larkin's resolutely prosaic organization of a poem is its passport to the poetic, so his insight into himself is his window on the world. He is the least solipsistic of artists. Unfortunately, this has now become less clear. Too much light has been shed. Of the poems previously unpublished in book form, a few are among his greatest achievements, many more one would not now want to be without, and all are good to have. But all the poems he didn't publish have been put in chronological order of composition along with those he did publish, instead of being given a separate section of their own. There is plenty of editorial apparatus to tell you how the original slim volumes were made up, but the strategic economy of their initial design has been lost.

All three of the original volumes start and end with the clean, dramatic decisiveness of a curtain going up and coming down again. The cast is not loitering in the auditorium beforehand. Nor is it to be found hanging out in the car park afterward. "The Less Deceived" starts with "Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album," which laments a lost love but with no confessions of the poet's personal inadequacy. It ends with "At Grass," which is not about him but about horses: a bugle call at sunset.

Only the groom, and the groom's boy,
With bridles in the evening come.

Similarly, "The Whitsun Weddings" starts and ends without a mention of the author. The first poem,

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"Here," is an induction into "the surprise of a large town" that sounds as if it might be Hull. No one who sounds as if he might be Larkin puts in an appearance. Instead, other people do, whose "removed lives/loneliness clarifies." The last poem in the book, "An Arundel Tomb," is an elegy written in a church crypt which is as sonorous as Gray's written in a churchyard, and no more petulant: that things pass is a fact made majestic, if not welcome.

As for "High Windows," the last collection published while he was alive, it may contain, in "The Building," his single most terror-stricken—and, indeed, terrifying—personal outcry against the intractable fact of death, but it begins and ends with the author well in the background. "To the Sea," the opening poem, the one in which the white steamer so transfixingly gets stuck in the afternoon, is his most thoroughgoing celebration of the element that he said he would incorporate into his religion if he only had one: water. "The Explosion" closes the book with a heroic vision of dead coal miners which could be called a hymn to immortality if it did not come from a pen that devoted so much effort to pointing out that mortality really does mean what it says.

These two poems, "To the Sea" and "The Explosion," which in "High Windows" are separated by the whole length of a short but weighty book, can be taken together as a case in point, because, as the chronological arrangement of the "Collected Poems" now reveals, they were written together, or almost. The first is dated October, 1969, and the second is dated January 5, 1970. Between them in "High Windows" come poems dated anything from five years earlier to three years later. This is only one instance, unusually striking but typical rather than exceptional, of how Larkin moved poems around through compositional time so that they would make in emotional space the kind of sense he wanted, and not another kind. Though there were poems he left out of "The Less Deceived" and put into "The Whitsun Weddings," it would be overbold to assume that any poem, no matter how fully achieved, that he wrote before "High Windows" but did not publish in it would have found a context later. Anthony Thwaite goes some way toward assuming exactly that—or, at any rate, suggesting it—when he says that Larkin had been stung by early refusals and had later on repressed excellent poems even when his friends urged him to publish them. Some of these poems, as we now see, were indeed excellent, but if a man is so careful to arrange his works in a certain order it is probably wiser to assume that when he subtracts something he is adding to the arrangement.

Toward the end of his life, in the years after "High Windows," Larkin famously dried up. Poems came seldom. Some of those that did come equalled his best, and "Aubade" was among his greatest. Larkin himself thought highly enough of it to send it out in pamphlet form to his friends and acquaintances, and they were quickly on the telephone to one another quoting phrases and lines from it. Soon it was stanzas, and in London there is at least one illustrious playwright who won't go home from a dinner party before he has found an excuse to recite the whole thing.

> This is a special way of being afraid
> No trick dispels. Religion used to
>   try,
> That vast moth-eaten musical
>   brocade
> Created to pretend we never die,
> And specious stuff that says *No
>   rational being*
> *Can fear a thing it will not feel,* not
>   seeing
> That this is what we fear—no sight,
>   no sound,
> No touch or taste or smell, nothing
>   to think with,
> Nothing to love or link with,
> The anaesthetic from which none
>   come round . . .

Had Larkin lived longer, there would eventually have had to be one more slim volume, even if slimmer than slim. But that any of the earlier suppressed poems would have gone into it seems very unlikely. The better they are, the better must have been his reasons for holding them back. Admittedly, the fact that he did not destroy them is some evidence that he was not averse to their being published after his death. As a seasoned campaigner for the preservation of British holograph manuscripts—he operated on the principle that papers bought by American universities were lost to civilization—he obviously thought that his own archive should be kept safe. But the question of *how* the suppressed poems should be published has now been answered: some other way than this. Arguments for how good they are miss the point, because it is not their weakness that is inimical to his total effect; it is their strength. There are hemistiches as riveting as anything he ever made public:

> Dead leaves desert in thousands . . .

He wrote that in 1953 and sat on it for more than thirty years. What other poet would not have got it into print somehow? The first two lines of a short poem called "Pigeons," written in 1957, are a paradigm distillation of his characteristic urban pastoralism:

> On shallow slates the pigeons shift together,
> Backing against a thin rain from the west . . .

Even more remarkable, there were whole big poems so close to being fully realized that to call them unfinished sounds like effrontery. Not only would Larkin never let a flawed poem through for the sake of its strong phrasing; he would sideline a strong poem because of a single flaw. But "Letter to a Friend About Girls," written in 1959, has nothing frail about it except his final indecision about whether Horatio is writing to Hamlet or Hamlet to Horatio. The writer complains that the addressee gets all the best girls without having to think about it, while he, the writer, gets, if any, only the ones he doesn't really want, and that after a long struggle.

> After comparing lives with you for years
> I see how I've been losing: all the while
> I've met a different gauge of girl from yours . . .

A brilliantly witty extended conceit, full of the scatological moral observation that Larkin and his friend Kingsley Amis jointly brought back from conversation into the literature from which it had been banished, the poem has already become incorporated into the Larkin canon that people quote to one another. So have parts of "The Dance," one of his longest single poems, even though unfinished. The story of an awkward, put-upon, recognizably Larkin-like lonely man failing to get together with a beautiful woman even though she seems to be welcoming his attentions, the poem could logically have been completed only by becoming Larkin's third novel, to set beside his other two, "Jill" and "A Girl in Winter." (Actually, the novel had already been written, by Kingsley Amis, and was called "Lucky Jim.")

But there might have been a better reason for abandoning the poem. Like the Horatio poem and many of the other poems that were held back, "The Dance" is decisive about what Larkin otherwise preferred to leave indeterminate. "Love Again," written in 1979, at the beginning of the arid last phase in which the poems that came to him seem more like bouts of fever than like showers of rain, states the theme with painful clarity.

> Love again: wanking at ten past three
> (Surely he's taken her home by now?),
> The bedroom hot as a bakery . . .

What hurts, though, isn't the vocabulary. When Larkin speaks of "Someone else feeling her breasts and cunt," he isn't speaking with untypical bluntness: though unfalteringly well judged, his tonal range always leaves room for foul language—shock effects are among his favorites. The pain at this point comes from the fact that it is so obviously Larkin talking. This time, the voice isn't coming through a persona: it's the man himself, only at his least complex, and therefore least individual. In his oeuvre, as selected and arranged by himself, there is a dialogue going on, a balancing of forces between perfection of the life and of the work—a classic conflict for which Larkin offers us a resolution second in its richness only to the later poems of Yeats. In much of the previously suppressed poetry, the dialogue collapses into a monologue. The man who has, at least in part, chosen his despair, or who, at any rate, strives to convince himself that he has, is usurped by the man who has no choice. The second man might well be thought of as the real man, but one of the effects of Larkin's work is to make us realize that beyond the supposed bedrock reality of individual happiness or unhappiness there is a social reality of creative fulfillment, or, failing that, of public duties faithfully carried out.

Larkin, in his unchecked personal despair, is a sacrificial goat with the sexual outlook of a stud bull. He thinks, and sometimes speaks, like a Robert Crumb character who has never recovered from being beaten up by a girl in the third grade. The best guess, and the least patronizing as well, is

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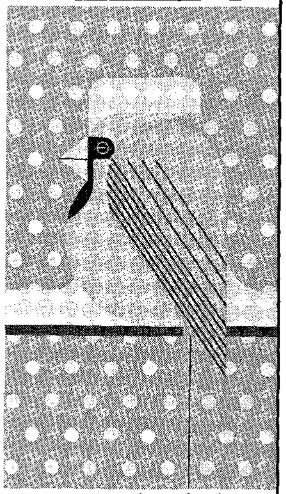

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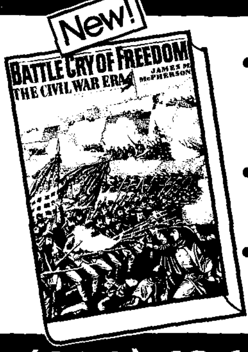

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that Larkin held these poems back because he thought them self-indulgent—too private to be proportionate. One of the consolations that Larkin's work offers us is that we can be unhappy without giving in, without letting our wish to be off the hook ("Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs") wipe out our lives ("the million-petalled flower/ Of being here"). The ordering of the individual volumes was clearly meant to preserve this balance, which the inclusion of even a few more of the suppressed poems would have tipped.

In the "Collected Poems," that hard-fought-for poise is quite gone. Larkin now speaks a good deal less for us all, and a good deal more for himself, than was his plain wish. That the self, the sad, dithering personal condition from which all his triumphantly assured work sprang, is now more comprehensively on view is not really a full compensation, except, perhaps, to those who aren't comfortable with an idol unless its head is made from the same clay as its feet.

On the other hand, to be given, in whatever order, all these marvellous poems that were for so long unseen is a bonus for which only a dolt would be ungrateful. Schnabel said that Beethoven's late piano sonatas were music better than could be played. Larkin's best poems are poetry better than can be said, but sayability they sumptuously offer. Larkin demands to be read aloud. His big, intricately formed stanzas, often bridging from one to the next, defeat the single breath but always invite it. As you read, the ideal human voice speaks in your head. It isn't his: as his gramophone records prove, he sounded like someone who expects to be interrupted. It isn't yours, either. It's ours. Larkin had the gift of reuniting poetry at its most artful with ordinary speech at its most unstudied—at its least literary. Though a scholar to the roots, he was not being perverse when he posed as a simple man. He thought that art should be self-sufficient. He was disturbed by the way literary studies had crowded out literature. But none of this means that he was simplistic. Though superficially a reactionary crusader against modernism, a sort of latter-day, one-man Council of Trent, he knew exactly when to leave something unexplained.

The process of explaining him will be hard to stop now that this book is available. It is, even so, a tremendous book, and, finally, despite all the candor it apparently offers, the mystery will be preserved for any reader acute enough to sense the depth under the clarity. Pushkin said that everything was on his agenda, even the disasters. Larkin knew about himself. In private hours of anguish, he commiserated with himself. But he was an artist, and that meant he was everyone; and what made him a genius was the effort and the resource he brought to bear in order to meet his superior responsibility.

Larkin went to hell, but not in a handcart. From his desolation he built masterpieces, and he was increasingly disinclined to settle for anything less. About twenty years ago in Britain, it became fashionable to say that all the poetic excitement was in America. Though things look less that way now, there is no need to be just as silly in the opposite direction. The English-speaking world is a unity. Britain and the United States might have difficulty absorbing each other's poetry, but most people have difficulty with poetry anyway. In Britain, Larkin shortened the distance between the people and poetry by doing nothing for his career and everything to compose artifacts that would have an independent, memorable life apart from himself. There is no inherent reason that the American reader, or any other English-speaking reader, should not be able to appreciate the results.

Art, if it knows how to wait, wins out. Larkin had patience. For him, poetry was a life sentence. He set happiness aside to make room for it. And if it turns out that he had no control over where his misery came from, doesn't that mean that he had even more control than we had thought over where it went to? Art is no less real for being artifice. The moment of truth must be prepared for. "Nothing to love or link with," wrote Larkin when he was fifty-five. "Nothing to catch or claim," he wrote when he was twenty-four, in a poem that only now sees the light. It was as if the death he feared to the end he had embraced at the start, just to raise the stakes. —CLIVE JAMES

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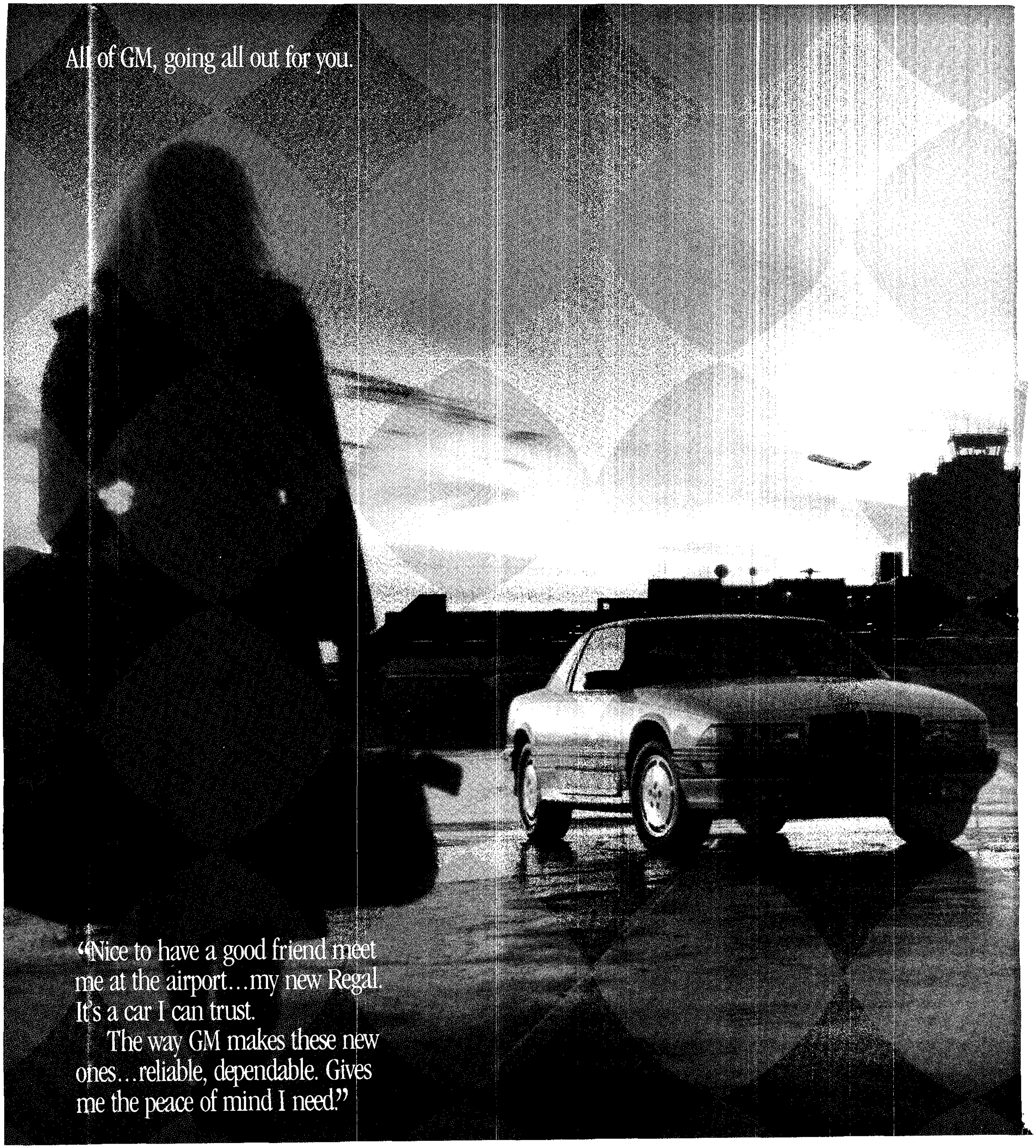
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